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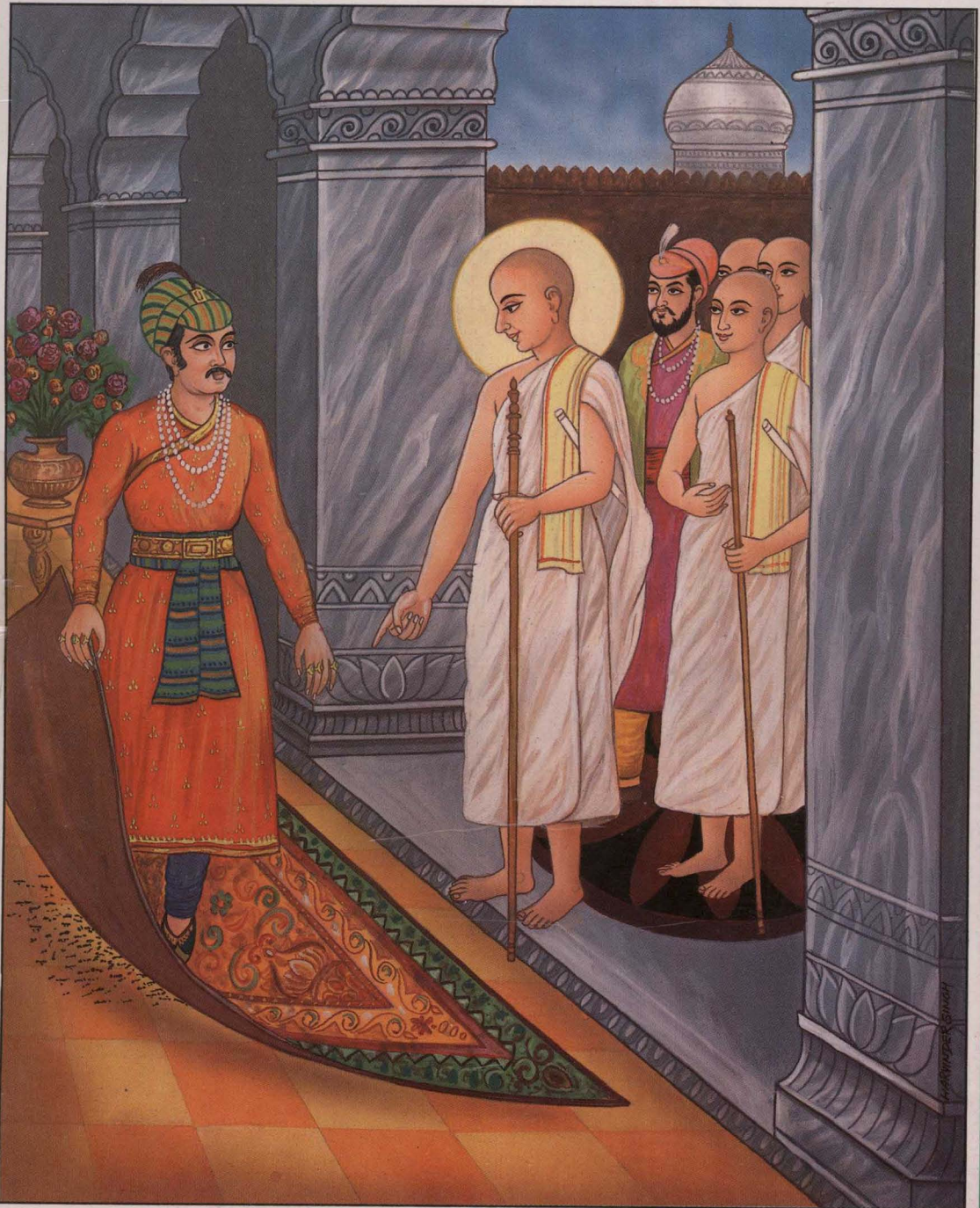
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Jagat Guru

Shri Heer Vijay Suri



MAHINDER SINGH

JAGAT GURU SHRI HEER VIJAY SURI

In this world there are some towering personalities who are not only the prominent characters in history but also the makers of the history. In the sixteenth century of the Vikram era, Jain Acharya Shri Heer Vijaya Suri was one such person who left lasting imprints not only on the Jain history but also on the history of the subcontinent. He played a major role in shaping Indian history of his times.

The sixteenth century of the Vikram era was a period of turmoil in Indian history. The Moghul emperor, Akbar the great, was ruling almost all of the great subcontinent with his unprecedented valor, diplomatic skill, religious tolerance, love for justice and appreciation of intellectual accomplishments.

Akbar respected scholars and sages. His reverence for Jagat Guru Shri Heer Vijaya Suri reached a stage that people started commenting—Akbar has changed his religion from Islam to Jainism.

Shri Heer Vijaya Suri had an extremely attractive and dominating personality. He had a unique magnetism. His speech had acquired astounding power due to its inherent sweetness and gravity backed by unparalleled scholarship. He followed the Jain doctrine of non-absolutism and became a great assimilator of ideas. Religious tolerance was natural to him. But at the same time he was steadfast in his own religious belief and was a strict and sincere follower of ascetic conduct. A devotee like Akbar repeatedly offered his services, "Guruji! What can I do for you?" His standard reply was, "Do good to others, offer amnesty to beings, remove the miseries of the masses, that is what you can do for me." This extreme detachment had impressed the emperor very much. Suri had very close contact with Akbar for about more than three years. After this his prominent scholarly disciples Vijayasen Suri, Bhanuchandra Upadhyaya, Shantichandra Upadhyaya, etc. remained in contact with Akbar. They accompanied him in his journeys to Kashmir and Lahore and continued to inspire him towards ahimsa, public service, and animal welfare.

It was this proximity with the Jain acharyas that inspired Akbar, a descendent of cruel Babar, to promulgate ordinances banning animal slaughter for specific periods throughout the country. He himself refrained from hunting and eating meat for six months in a year. These were the reasons that Akbar became famous as ahimsa lover and benevolent ruler.

— **Shrichand Surana 'Saras'**

Written by:

Acharyadev Shri Rajayash Surishvar ji M.

Compilation:

Srichand Surana 'Saras'

Managing Editors:

Dr. Mansukhbhai Jain, Sanjay Surana

English Translation:

Surendra Bothara

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MAHAVIR SEVA TRUST

C/o DR. M. B. JAIN, B-29/30, YOJANA APTS., S. V. ROAD, MALAD (WEST), MUMBAI-400 064 TEL. : 8892121/8811397

FEDERATION OF JAIN ASSOCIATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA (JAINA)

C/o DR. P. B. GADA, 4410, 50TH STREET, LUBBOCK, TEXAS-79414 (U.S.A.)

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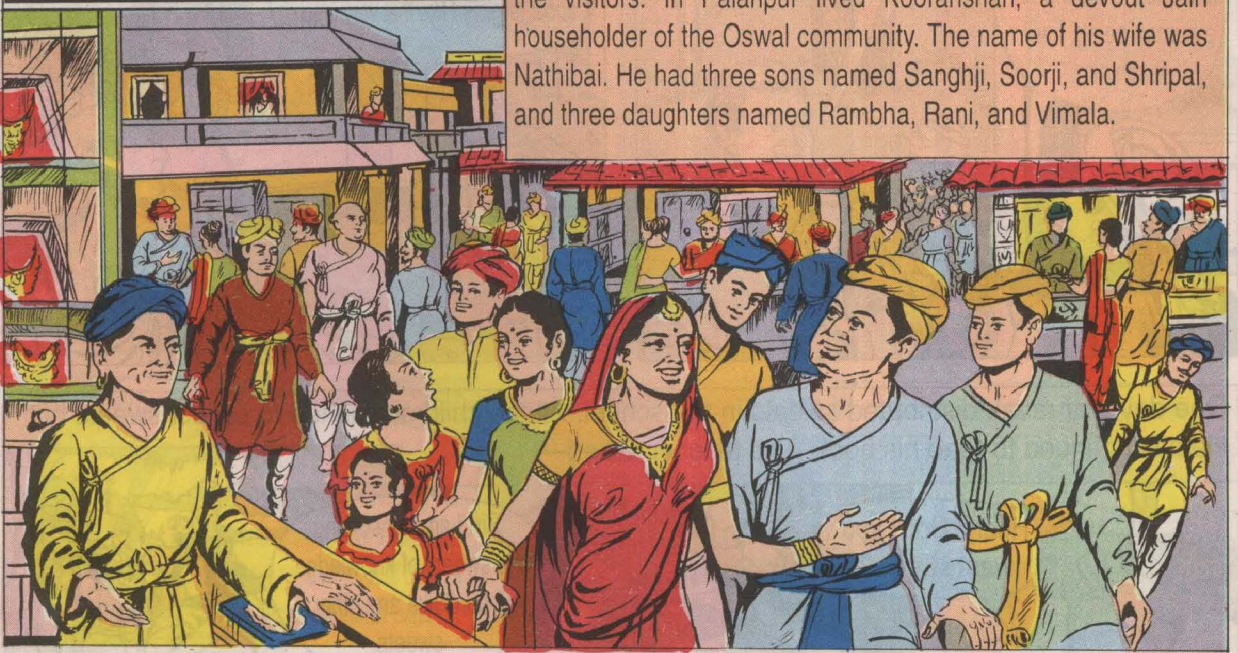
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JAGAT GURU SHRI HEER VIJAYA SURI

Situated on the banks of river Banas, Palanpur was an important trade center of Gujarat. Large mansions and big markets with attractively decorated jewellery shops astonished the visitors. In Palanpur lived Kooranshah, a devout Jain householder of the Oswal community. The name of his wife was Nathibai. He had three sons named Sanghji, Soorji, and Shripal, and three daughters named Rambha, Rani, and Vimala.

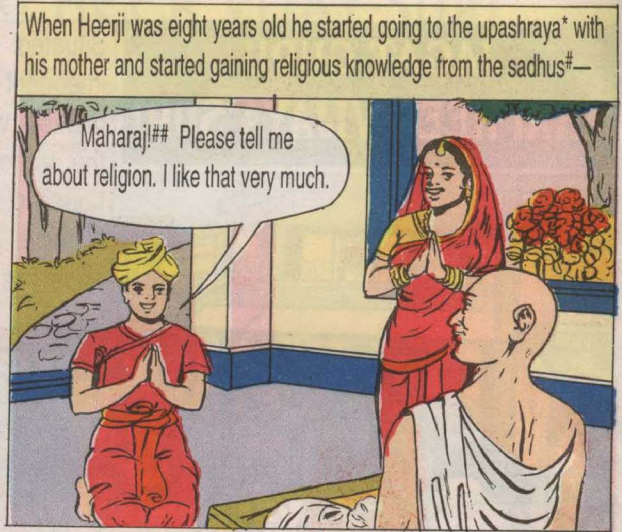


A few days later Nathibai gave birth to the fourth son. When Kooranshah looked at the new born he exclaimed—

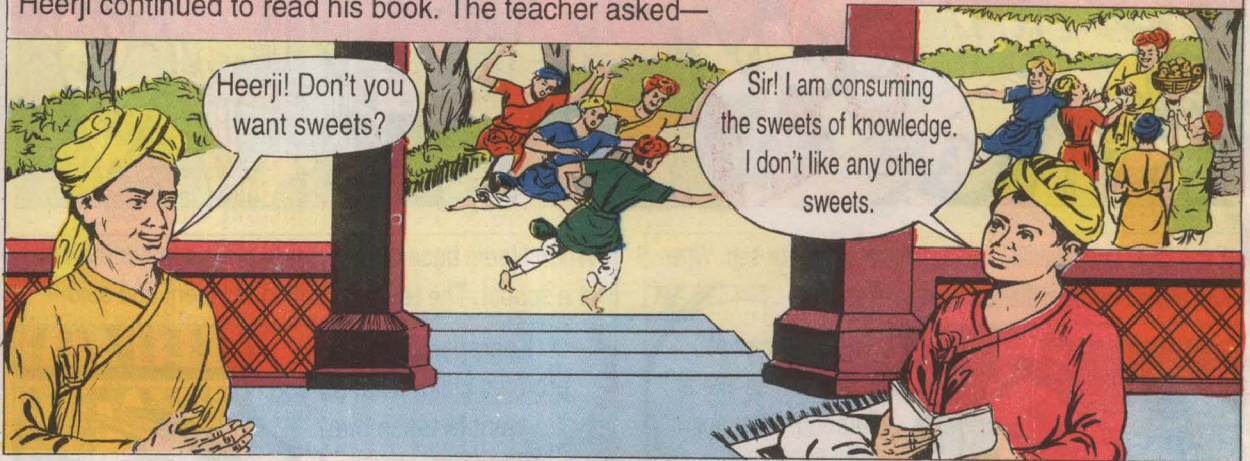


When Heerji became five years old his father took him to a school. The teacher looked at Heerji and said—





One day a shravak distributed sweets in the school. All the children rushed to collect sweets but Heerji continued to read his book. The teacher asked—



One day the teacher told a story to test the intelligence of the children—

A merchant had three sons. One was brave. He learned martial arts. Later he became a king. The second entered business after his studies. He earned wealth and benefited many people by his charities. The third studied scriptures and became a scholarly sage. He devoted his life to the welfare of all beings.



* place of stay for Jain ascetics. # Jain ascetics

a term of address, conveying reverence, commonly used for Jain ascetics.

After telling the story the teacher asked—

Tell me who was the best among the three....

All the students remained silent.

The teacher asked Heerji—

The one who studied scriptures.

Heerji! Now you tell me the answer....

Why?

A king protects only his state. A charitable person benefits only the poor and destitute. But a scholarly sage protects dharma. And dharma is the best and greatest wealth.

The teacher was pleased with this answer. He came to Kooranshah and said—

Shahji! Your son Heerji will one day become a great religious teacher.

Kooranshah said—

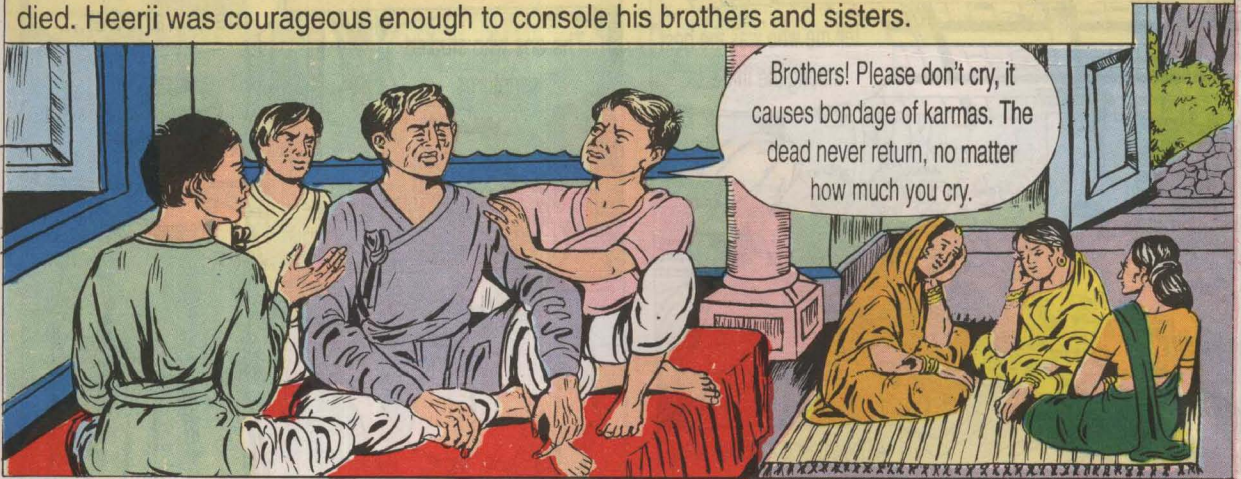
Our family is not so lucky that one becomes a sadhu.

This comment pinched Heerji. He at once said—

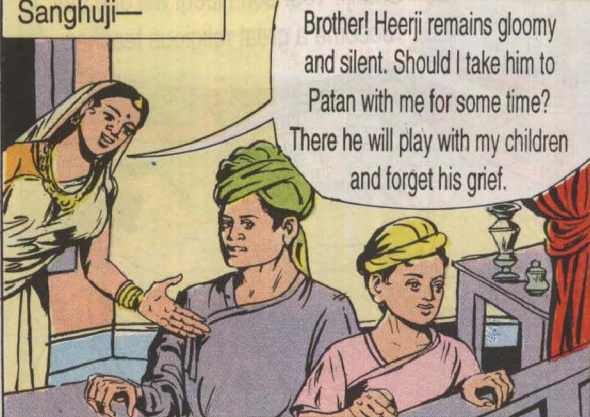
Father! If some one in our family wants to become a sadhu I hope you will not stop him. I want to become a sadhu.

His father lovingly embraced Heerji.

When Heerji was just 12 years old his father suddenly died. Some time later his mother also died. Heerji was courageous enough to console his brothers and sisters.

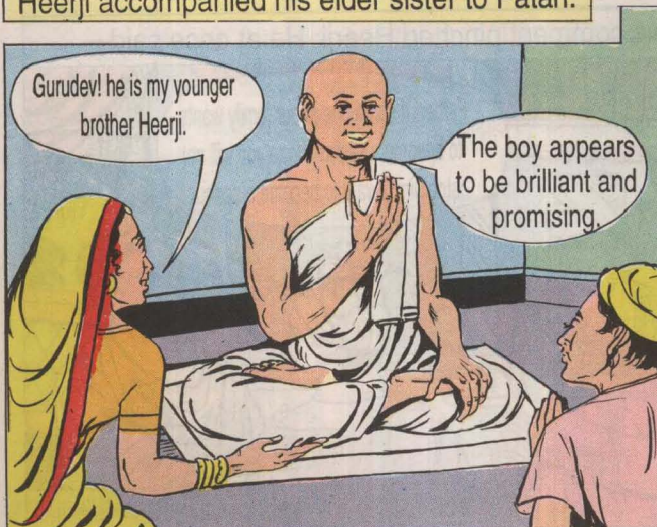


But after the demise of his parents a gloom descended over Heerji. Elder sister, Vimala, asked Sanghuji—



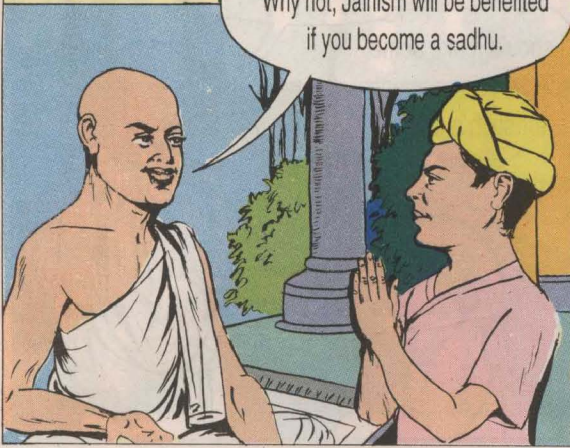
Heerji accompanied his elder sister to Patan.

One day he went to upashraya with his sister. Acharya Vijayadan Suri was staying there. On seeing Heerji he asked—



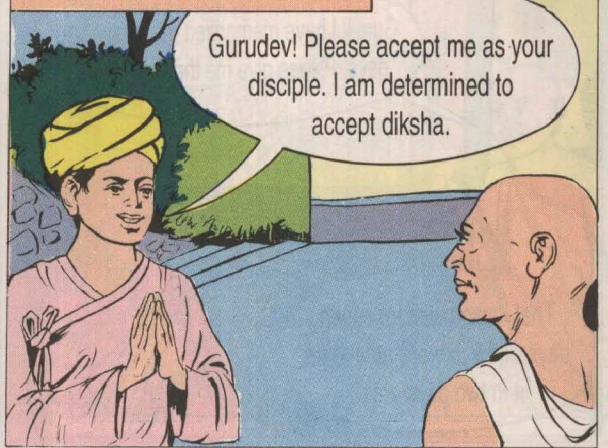
Gurudev thought that the playful child is joking. He said—

Why not, Jainism will be benefited if you become a sadhu.



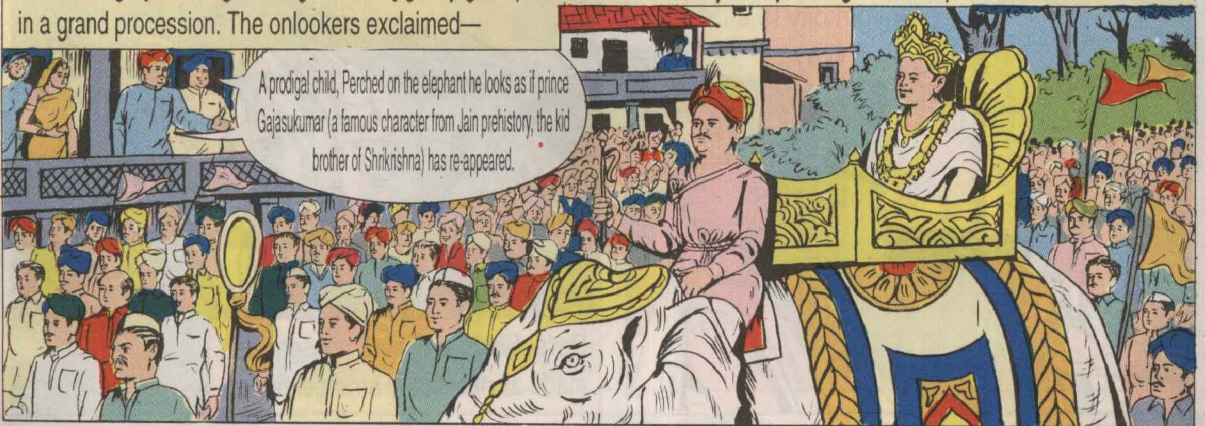
Heerji visited Acharyashri everyday. One day he again asked Gurudev—

Gurudev! Please accept me as your disciple. I am determined to accept diksha.



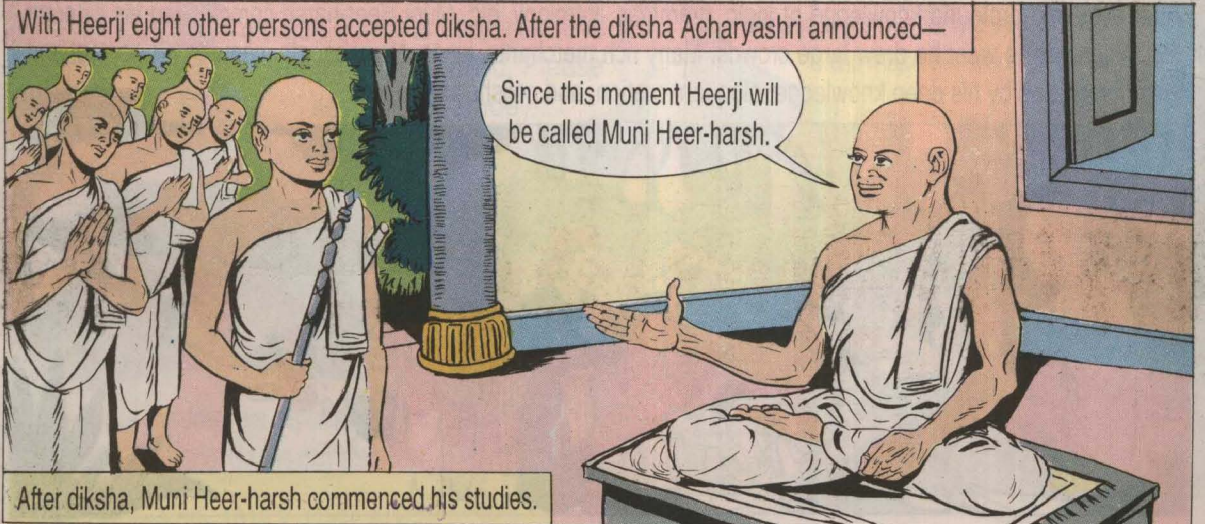
Acharyashri called Heerji's sister and prominent people of Patan society and sought their permission to initiate Heerji. The Patan Sangh [Jain religious organization] gladly gave permission. At last boy Heerji, sitting on an elephant, was taken around in a grand procession. The onlookers exclaimed—

A prodigal child, Perched on the elephant he looks as if prince Gajasukumar (a famous character from Jain prehistory, the kid brother of Shrikrishna) has re-appeared.



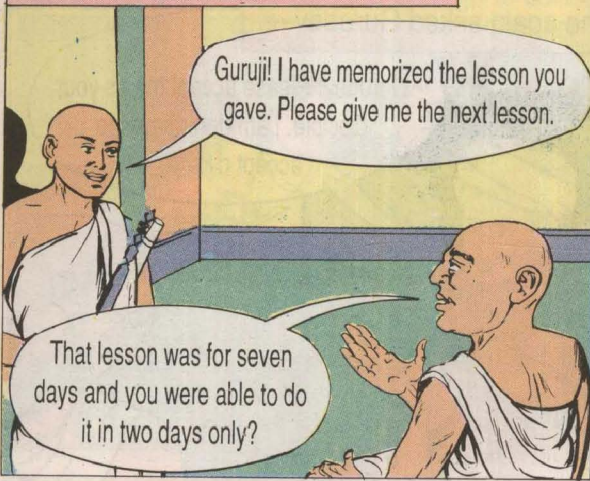
With Heerji eight other persons accepted diksha. After the diksha Acharyashri announced—

Since this moment Heerji will be called Muni Heer-harsh.

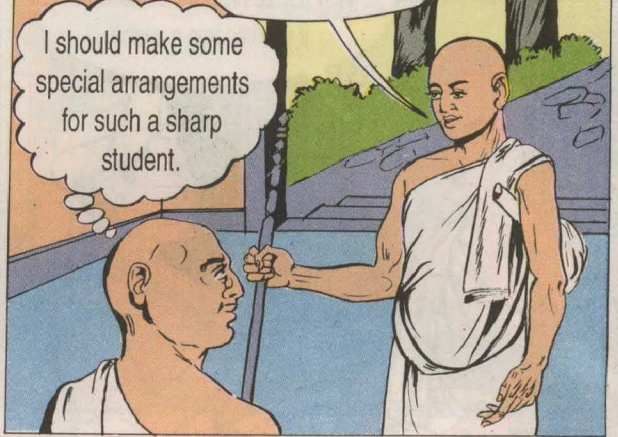


After diksha, Muni Heer-harsh commenced his studies.

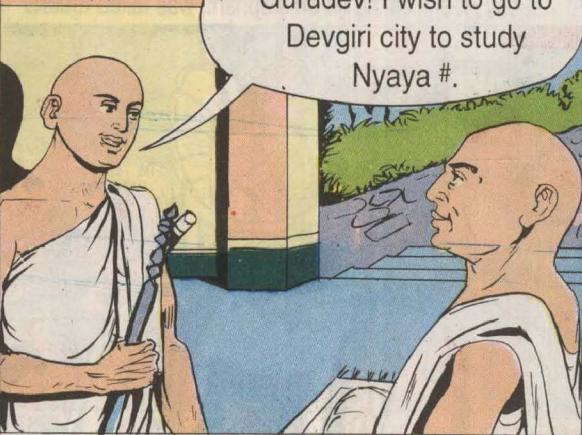
Within two days he requested Guruji—



I completed it yesterday only.



A few years later Muni Heer-harsh requested Acharyashri—



Acharyashri sent Muni Heer-harsh with two other ascetics to Devgiri.



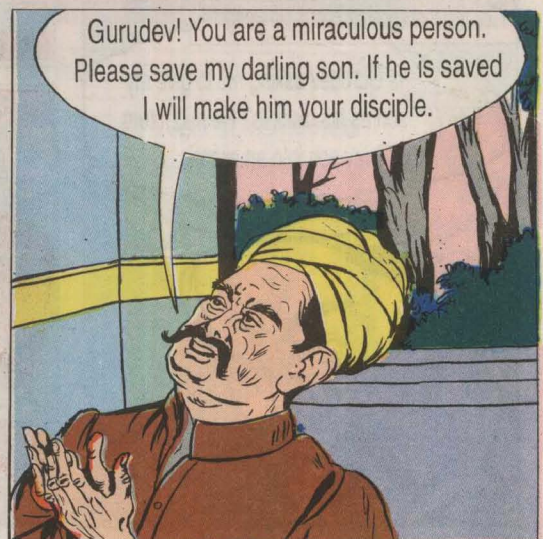
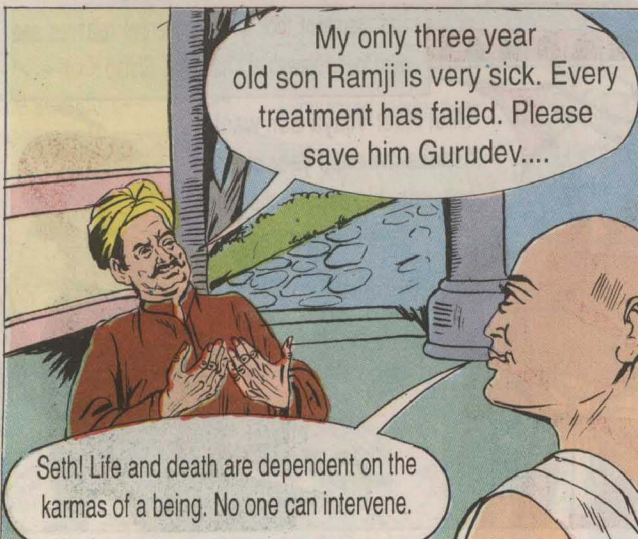
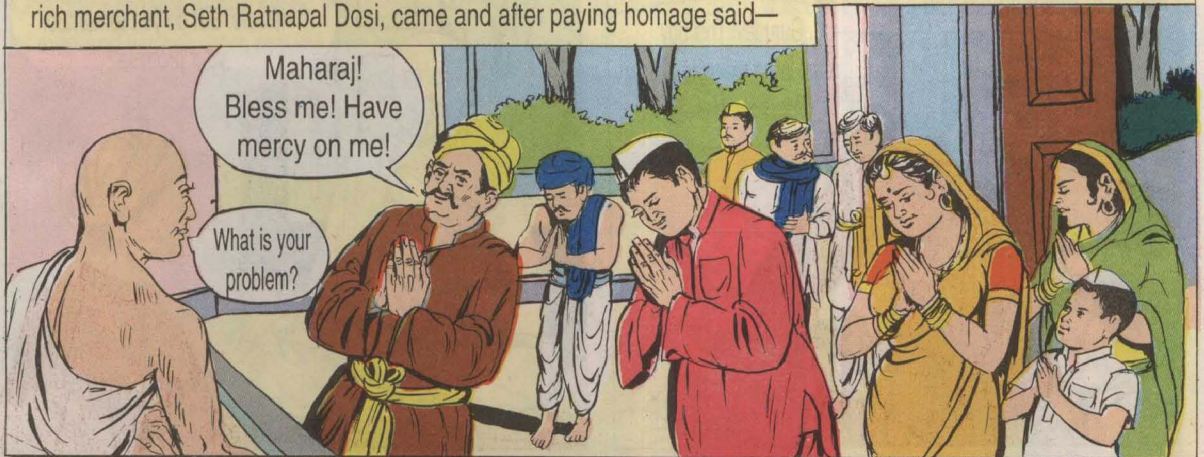
After acquiring profound knowledge of logic, grammar, astrology, etc. Muni Heer-harsh commenced his itinerant life. Wherever he went he drew large crowds. Many rich merchants, kings, Nawabs, etc: came in his contact and were impressed by his deep knowledge, eloquent oration, and polished behaviour.



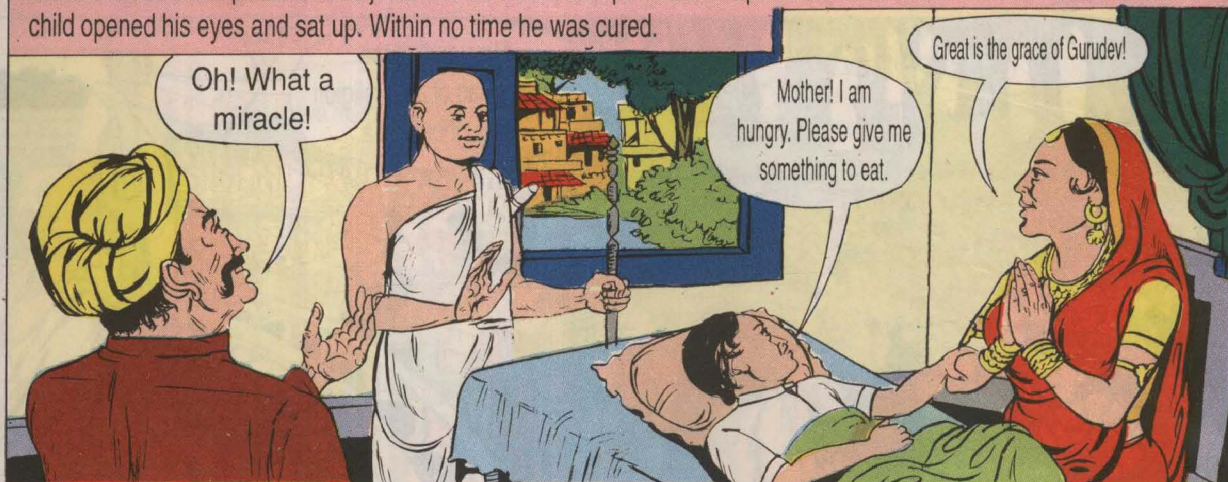
In due course Acharyashri, with his blessings, awarded the status of Acharya to Muni Heer-harsh in the presence of the Sangh of Sirohi#.



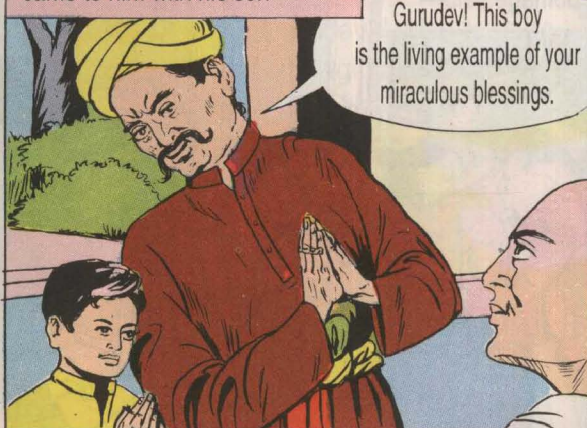
Spreading his message in towns and cities of Gujarat, Acharya Heer Vijaya Suri reached Khambhat. One day a rich merchant, Seth Ratnapal Dosi, came and after paying homage said—



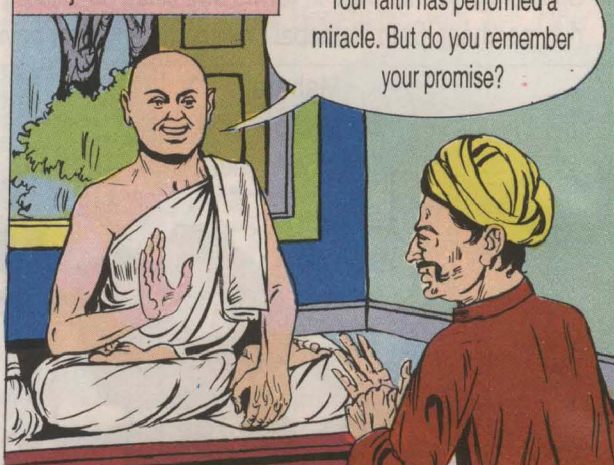
When the merchant persisted Suriji went to his house and put Vasakshep# on the head of the child and blessed him. The child opened his eyes and sat up. Within no time he was cured.



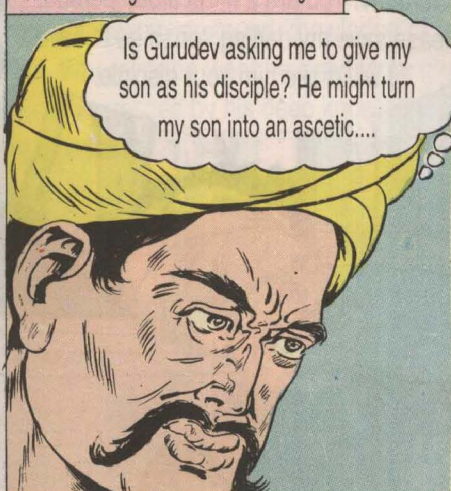
After five years Suriji visited Khambhat again. Ratnapal came to him with his son—



Suriji smiled and said—



The merchant got humiliated. He thought—



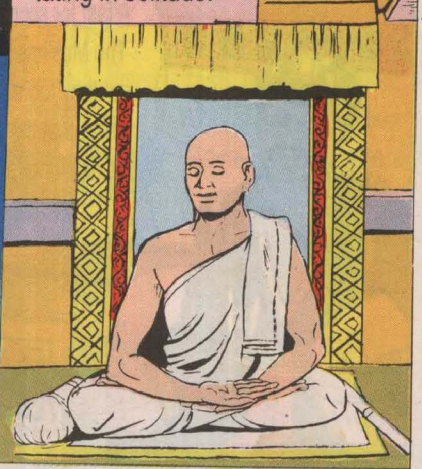
The merchant took some influential relatives and went to the Nawab of Khambhat, Shitab Khan—



A fragrant, potentized, and auspicious powder Jain ascetics keep and give with their blessings.

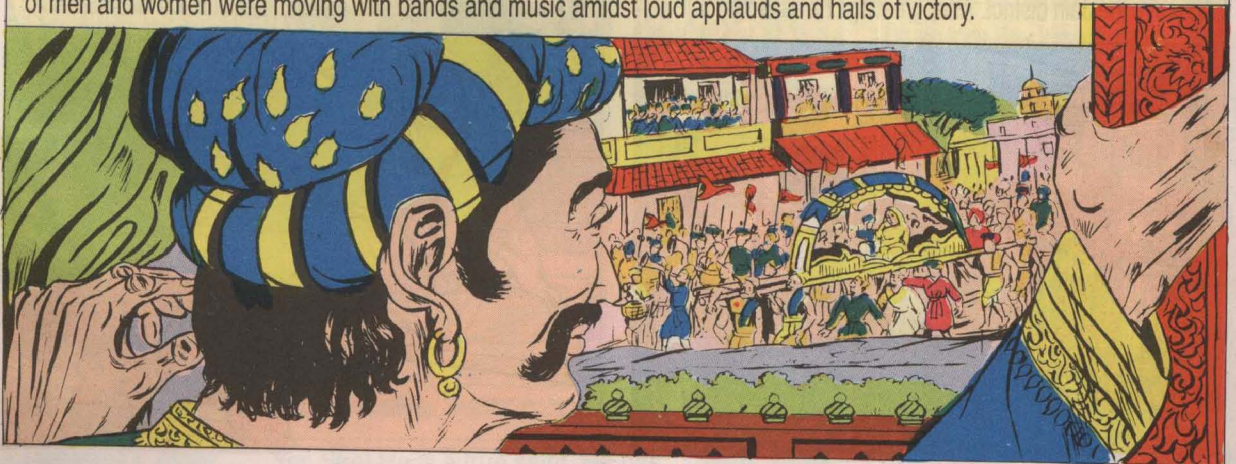
At the Nawab's instruction 10-20 soldiers went to the upashraya to arrest Suriiji.

Heer Vijaya Suri was meditating in solitude.



The soldiers searched everywhere in the upashraya but failed to find him. They returned disappointed.

One day Emperor Akbar, sitting in the balcony of his palace at Fatehpur Sikri, was observing a large procession. Hoards of men and women were moving with bands and music amidst loud applaus and hails of victory.



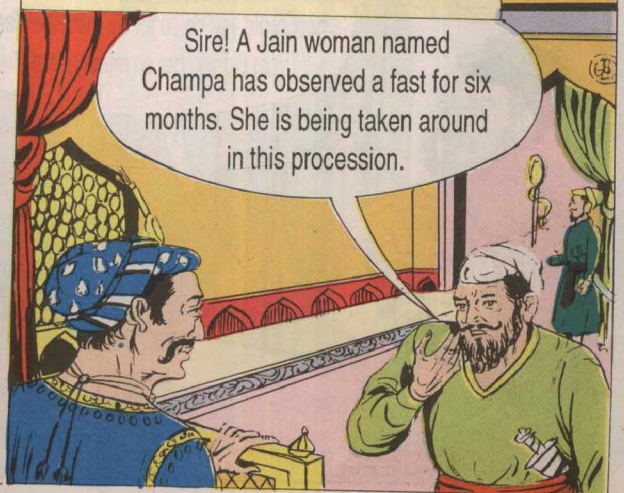
The emperor called his attendant—

Find out what is the occasion for such grand celebrations....

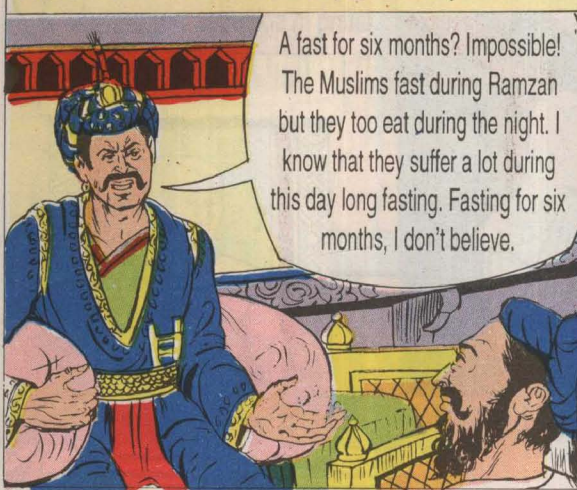


After some time the attendant returned and said—

Sire! A Jain woman named Champa has observed a fast for six months. She is being taken around in this procession.

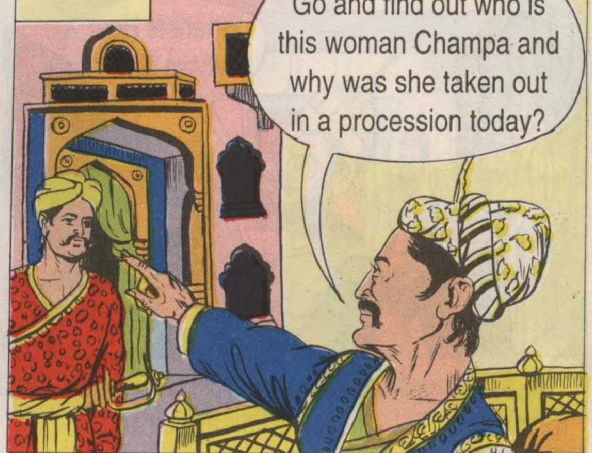


Akbar looked at the attendant in surprise—



A fast for six months? Impossible! The Muslims fast during Ramzan but they too eat during the night. I know that they suffer a lot during this day long fasting. Fasting for six months, I don't believe.

The emperor called Mangal Chowdhary, a faithful servant, and ordered—

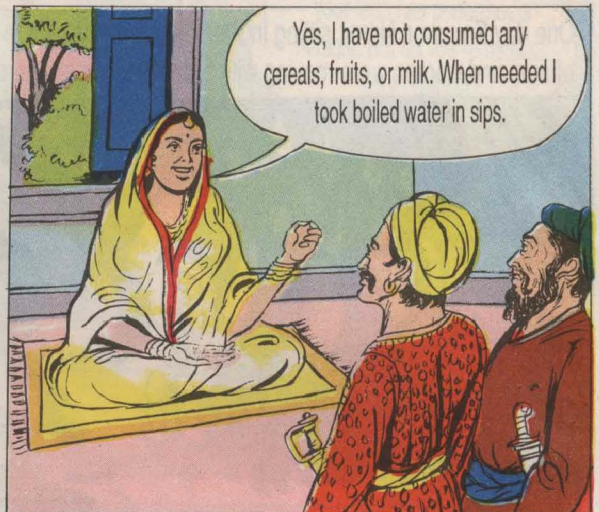


Go and find out who is this woman Champa and why was she taken out in a procession today?

Mangal Chowdhary with Kamru Khan went to Champa Bai's house in the Jain district. After greetings he asked—



Sister! Have you not eaten anything for last six months?



Yes, I have not consumed any cereals, fruits, or milk. When needed I took boiled water in sips.

Mangal Chowdhary asked—



I cannot remain hungry even for a day, how could you do so for six months. Where from did you get so much energy?

I have no energy. This is the power of Jineshvar Bhagavan, and my guru Heer Vijaya Suri. With the help of that power I was able to fast for six months.

Mangal Chowdhary returned and giving all details said—

Sire! Champa Bai says that her power came through the blessings of her guru Heer Vijaya Suri.

Akbar was all the more surprised.

With the blessings of a guru a slim woman fasts for six months! Who is this guru Heer Vijaya Suri and where does he live....

The emperor asked Mangal Chowdhary—

Where is her guru now?

Sire! Heer Vijaya Suri is at present in Gujarat.

Akbar asked one of his district officers, Ittemad Khan—

You have spent a lot of time in Gujarat. Do you know Heer Vijaya Suri?

Yes Sire! He is a true saint. He has no possessions like cattle and gold, and does not even touch females. He always moves on feet and prays to God.

I should meet such a true hermit sometime. He should be invited to our court....

The emperor summoned prominent Jains from Agra and Fatehpur Sikri to his court and said—

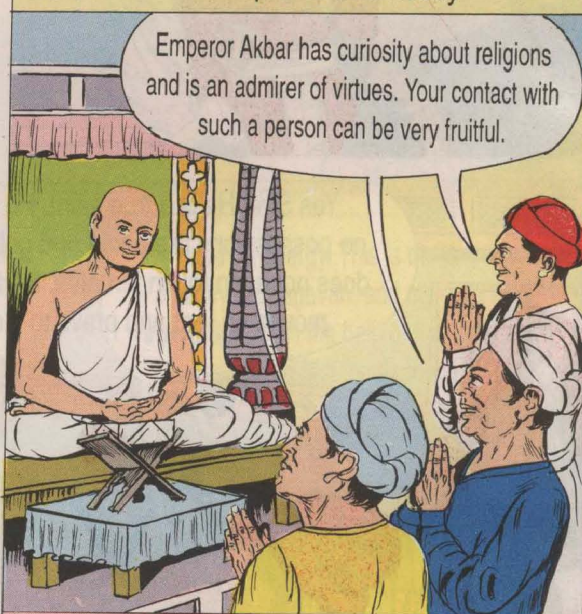


The local shravaks wrote a letter of request to the Ahmedabad Sangh.

Akbar sent this letter with a royal order to the governor of Ahmedabad, Shihab Khan, who, in turn, called the prominent Jains of Ahmedabad and conveyed the message of Akbar.



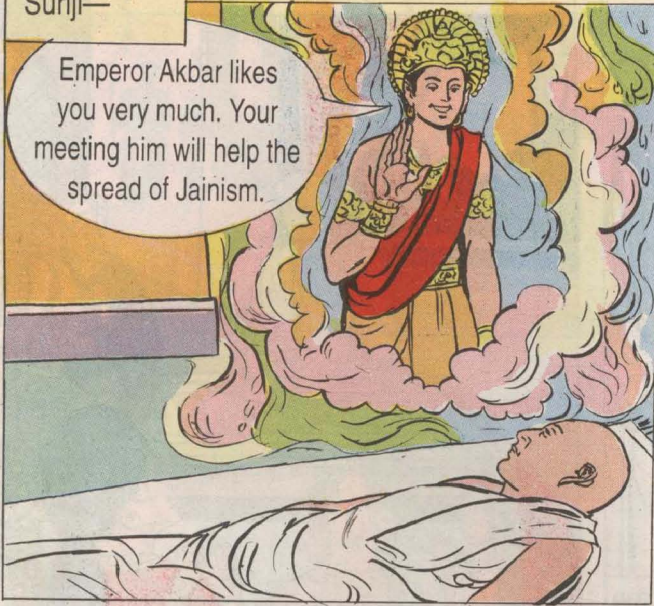
The shravaks of Ahmedabad went to Heer Vijaya Suri and requested earnestly—



Appreciating the request of the sangh and the usefulness of the mission, Suriiji left for Agra.

During his journey, crossing river Mahi, he arrived at village Vatadara. At night he had a grand vision. A divine figure appeared and after greetings said to Suriiji—

Emperor Akbar likes you very much. Your meeting him will help the spread of Jainism.

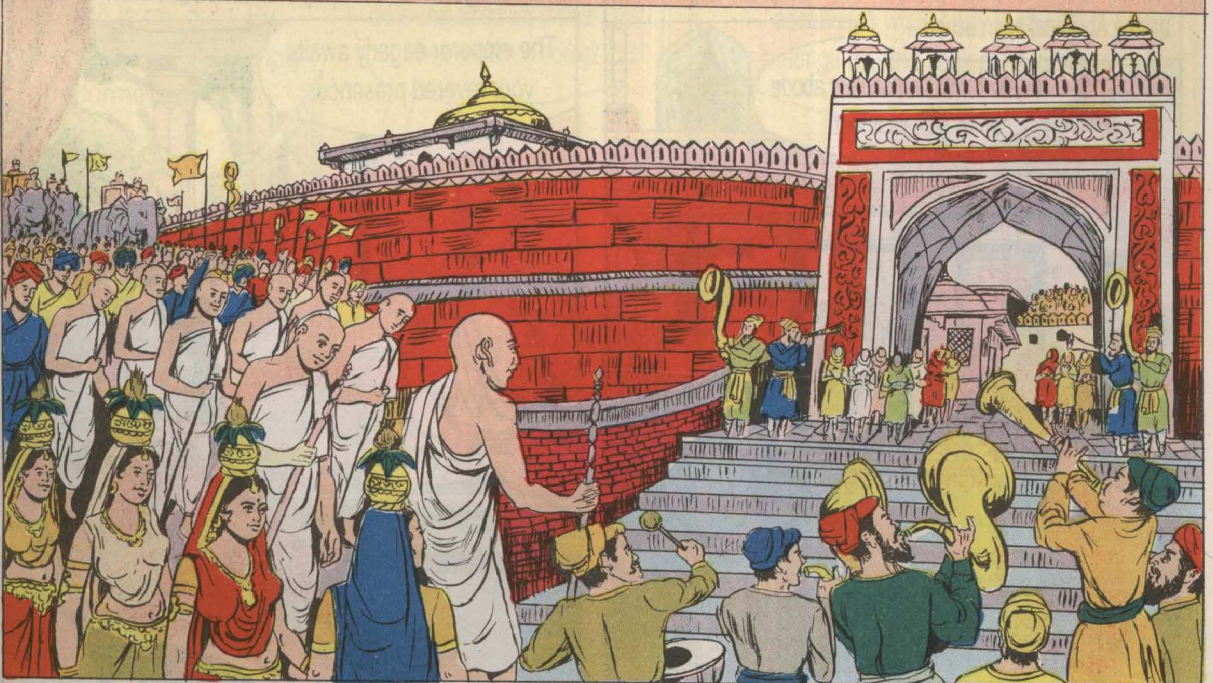


This inspiration added to the enthusiasm of Suriiji. After a long journey of nearly seven months he came to Fatehpur Sikri with his disciples.



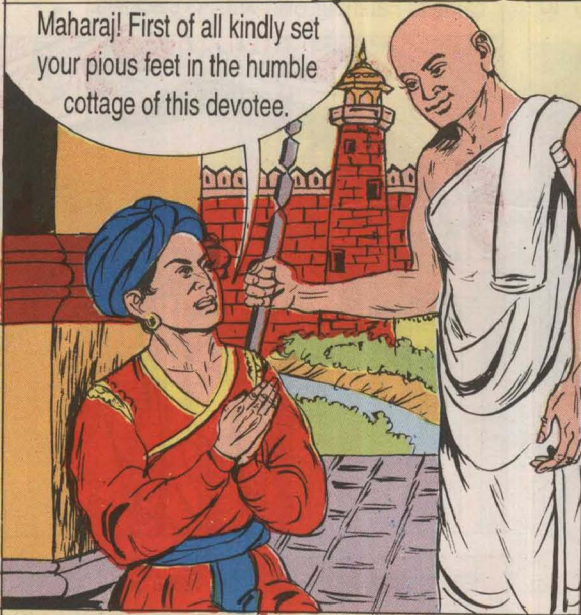
Hearing about the arrival of Heer Vijaya Suri thousands of beautifully attired men, women, and children thronged the streets of Fatehpur Sikri and proceeded with enthusiasm

to receive Suriiji at the main city gate. The emperor also sent hundreds of soldiers with royal elephants, horses, camels, chariots and bands. When Suriiji, his 67 disciples and hundreds of devotees came in view, welcoming drums were sounded. The royal band played the welcoming tunes. The ladies with propitious urns on their heads with, rice grains, and multicolored flowers in their hands advanced to welcome and provide auspicious signs to the arriving guests. The large crowd started hails of victory. Suriiji entered Fatehpur Sikri.



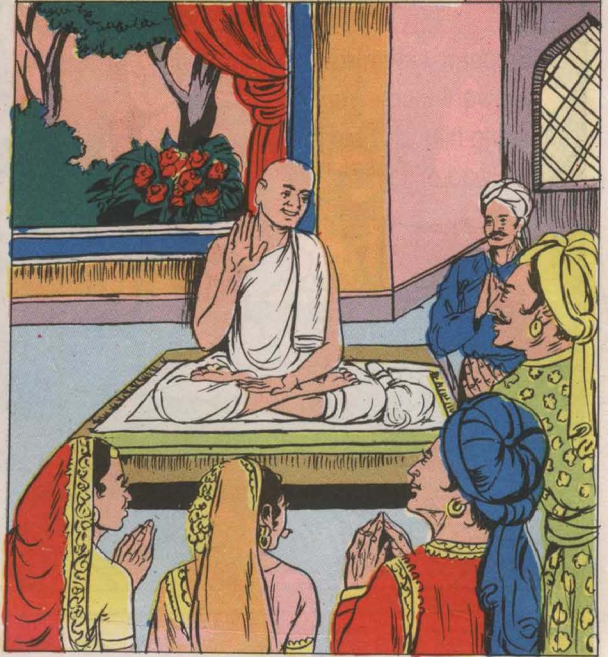
All of a sudden a Rajput warrior approached and requested—

Maharaj! First of all kindly set your pious feet in the humble cottage of this devotee.



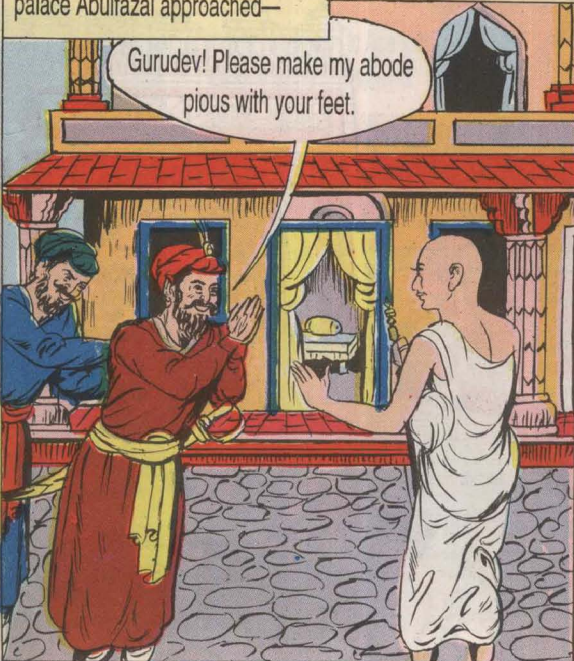
This warrior was Jaganmull Kachhavaha, the younger brother of King Biharimull of Jaipur.

Suriji had to accept Jaganmull's request. That day the family of the Kachhavaha prince remained in attendance of Suriji. They also listened to his discourse.



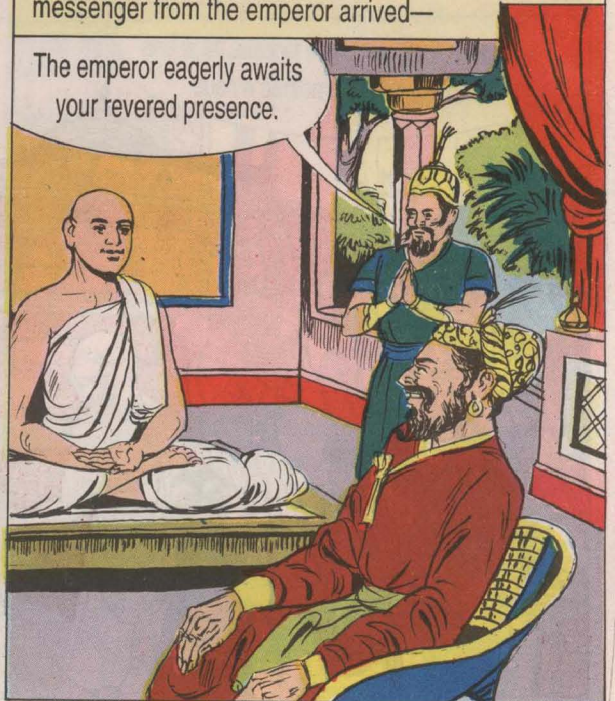
Next morning some prominent courtiers came and extended the formal royal welcome. Right in front of Jaganmull's palace was Shekh Abulfazal's palace. As soon as Suriji left Jaganmull's palace Abulfazal approached—

Gurudev! Please make my abode pious with your feet.

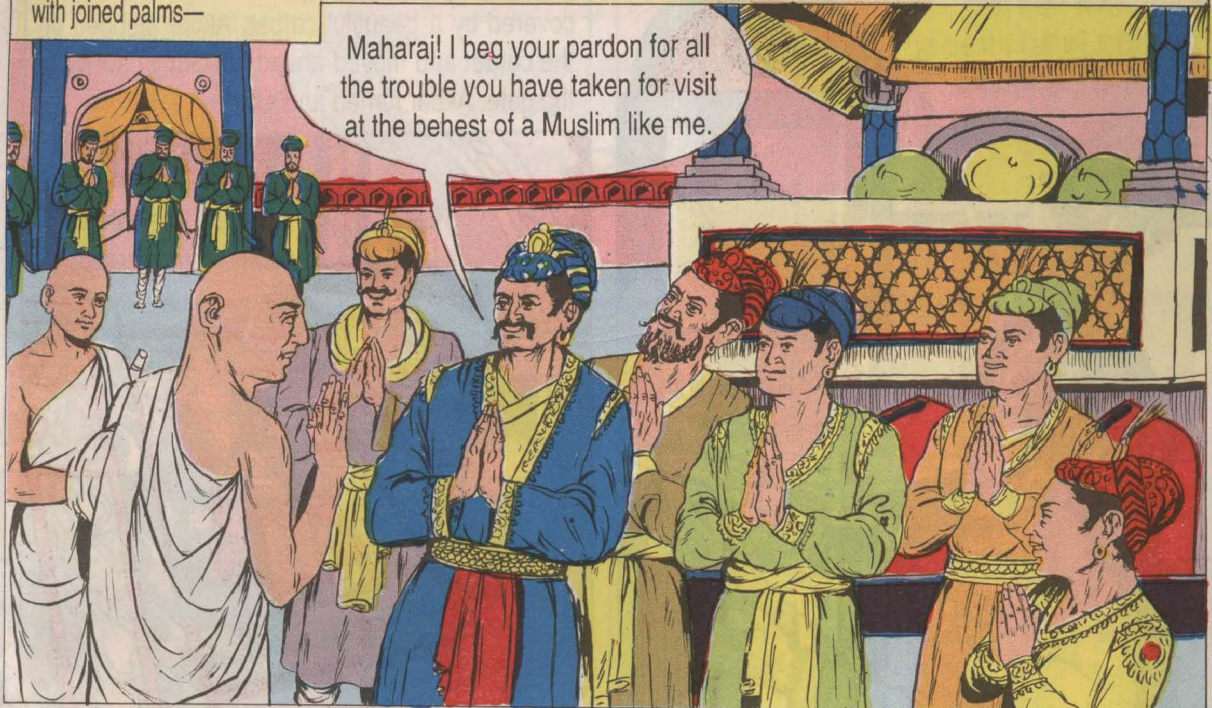


Suriji stayed there with his disciples. Abulfazal had a long religious discussion with him. Some time later a messenger from the emperor arrived—

The emperor eagerly awaits your revered presence.



When Suriiji with 13 other ascetics reached the court, Emperor Akbar got up from his throne and advanced, with his three sons and other dignitaries including Birbal, to extend greetings. Suriiji raised his hand and gave blessings. Akbar submitted humbly with joined palms—

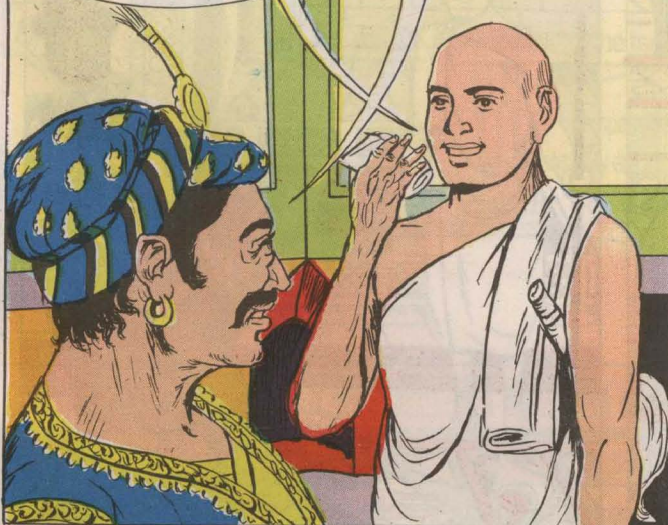


Maharaj! I beg your pardon for all the trouble you have taken for visit at the behest of a Muslim like me.

Acharyashri smiled and said—

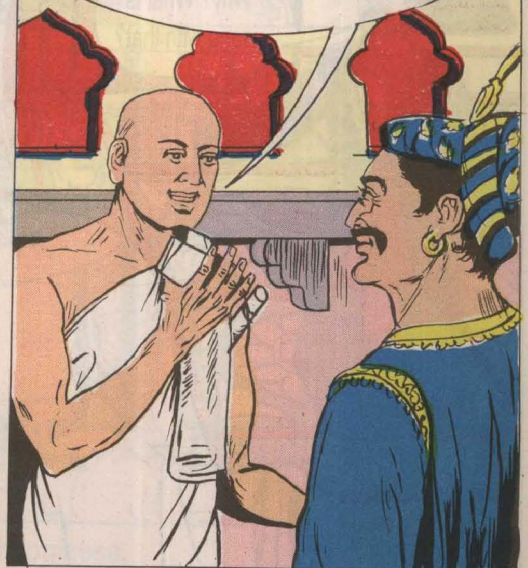
Emperor! It is nothing. I am a sadhu and to preach is my duty. By coming here I have simply performed my duty.

Maharaj! I had ordered the governor of Ahmedabad to offer you elephants, horses, chariots, palanquins, etc. Why did you not accept any of these? Was there something lacking?

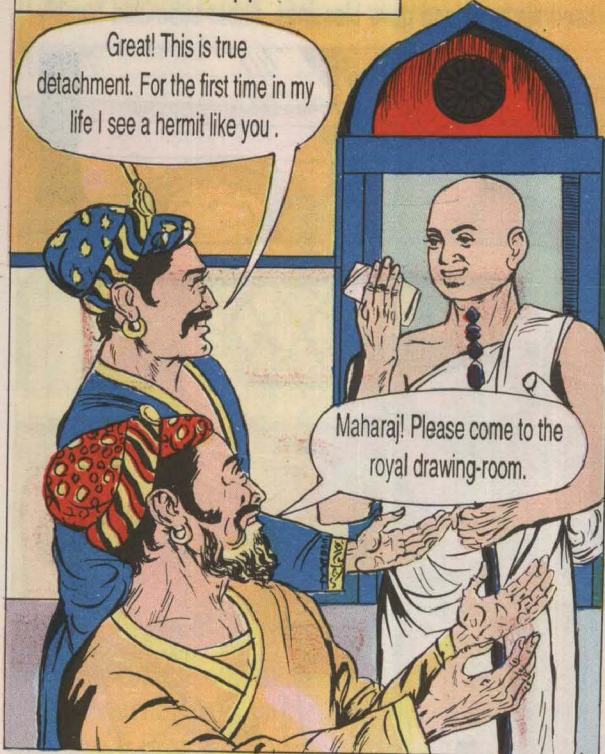


Acharyashri said—

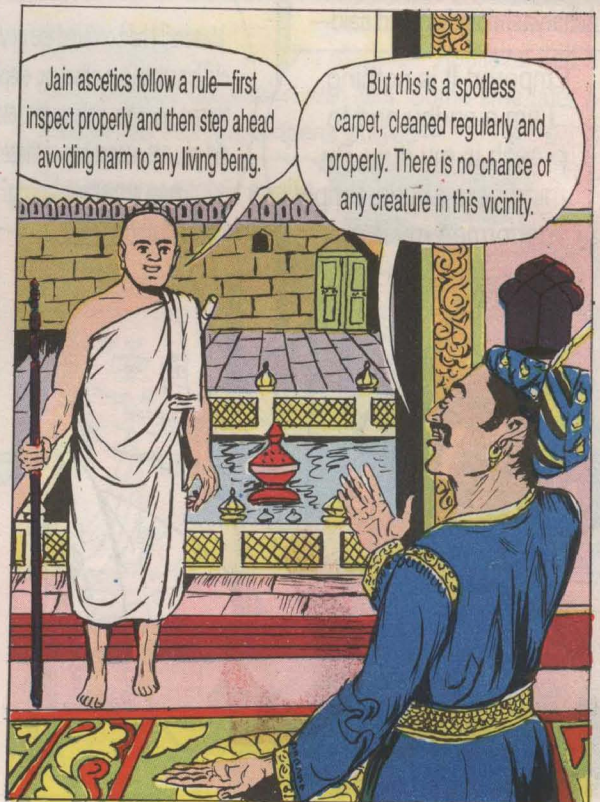
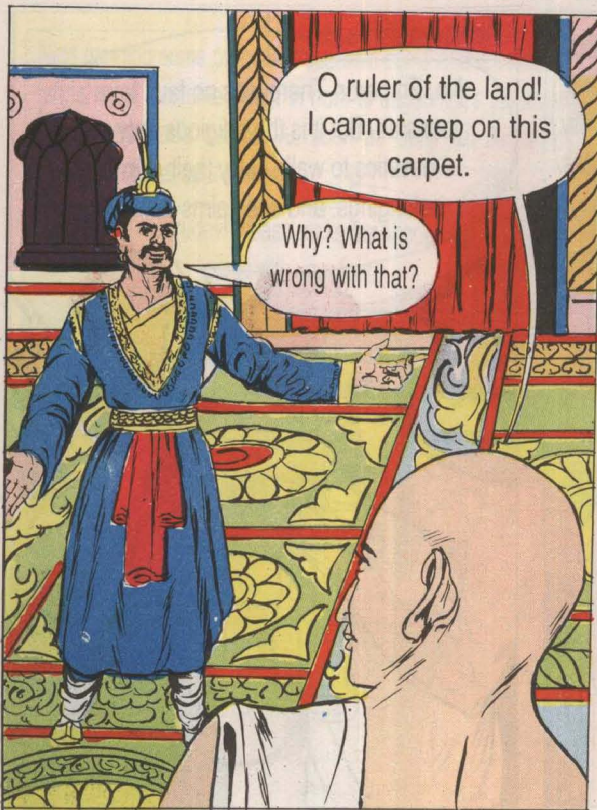
No, Emperor! There was no fault from your side. But it is the religious duty of ascetics to walk, carry their own belongings, and seek alms to eat.



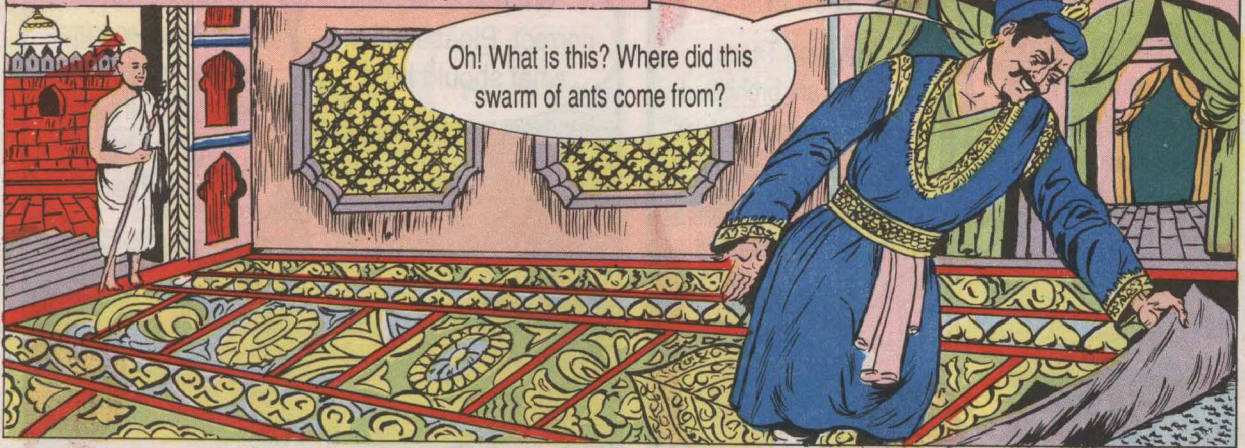
Akbar nodded in appreciation—



Akbar lead the way to his private room. The floor of the large and richly decorated room was covered by a beautiful carpet. Akbar stepped on the carpet and moved ahead but Suriji paused at the gate. Akbar turned and asked—



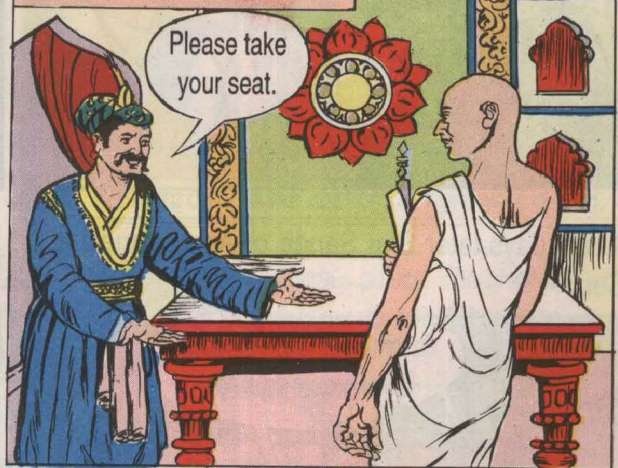
Suriji was looking at a corner of the carpet with his penetrating gaze. Akbar saw this and he suddenly lifted the corner of the carpet. He was surprised by what he saw—



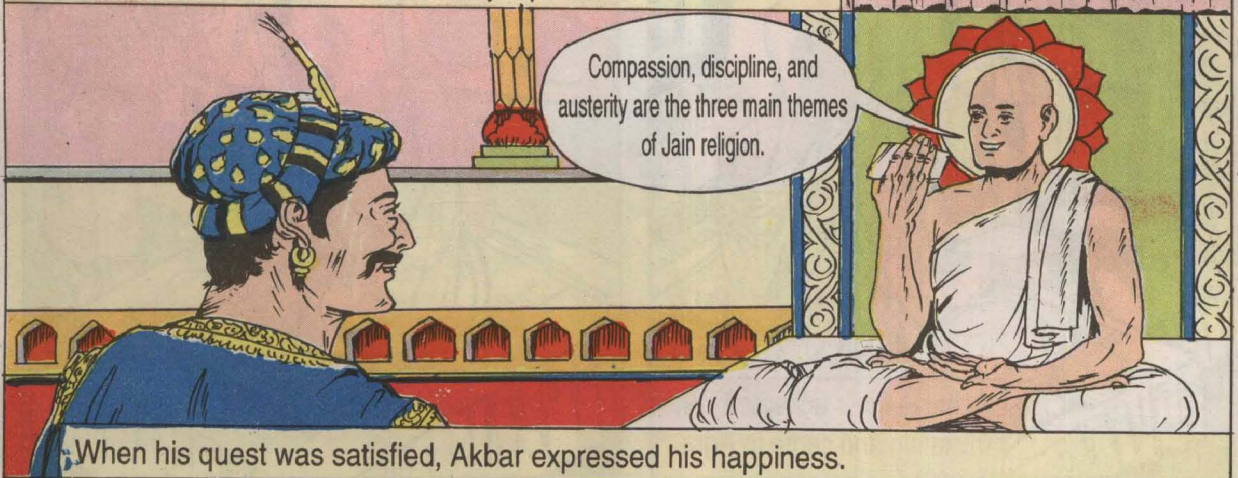
Akbar took a piece of cloth and removed the ants from the spot.



Suriji came into the room.



Akbar was curious to know about Jainism. Suriji explained the tenets in brief—

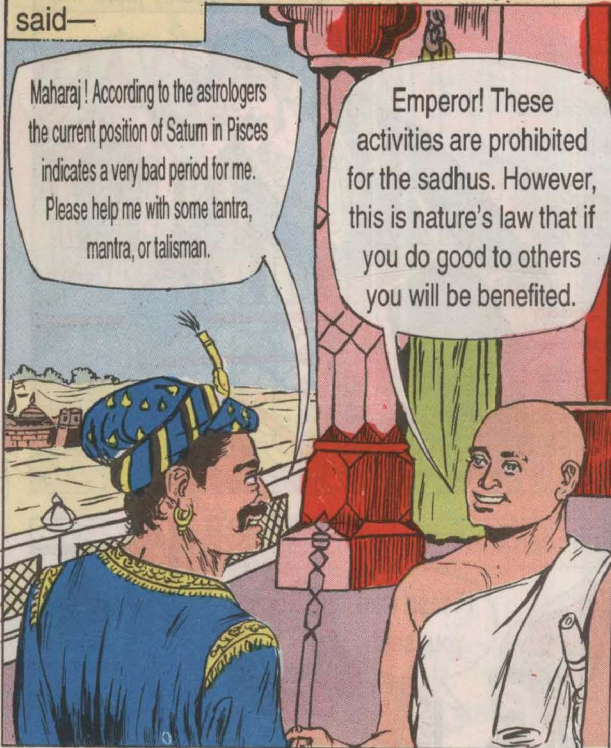


When his quest was satisfied, Akbar expressed his happiness.

One day finding himself alone with Suriiji, Akbar said—

Maharaj! According to the astrologers the current position of Saturn in Pisces indicates a very bad period for me. Please help me with some tantra, mantra, or talisman.

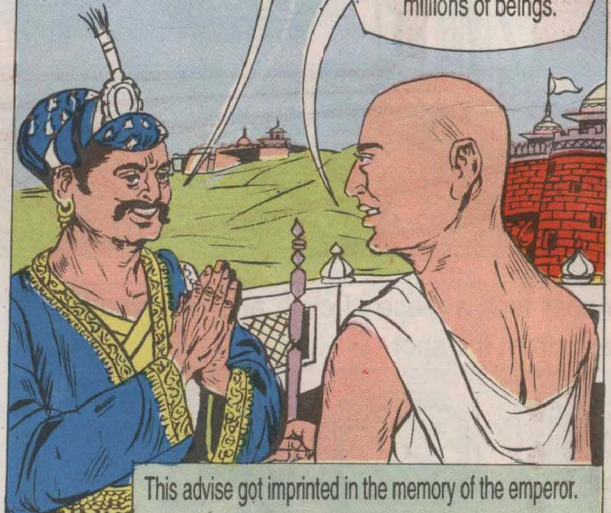
Emperor! These activities are prohibited for the sadhus. However, this is nature's law that if you do good to others you will be benefited.



The emperor was highly impressed—

What you say is correct. Please tell me what should I do?

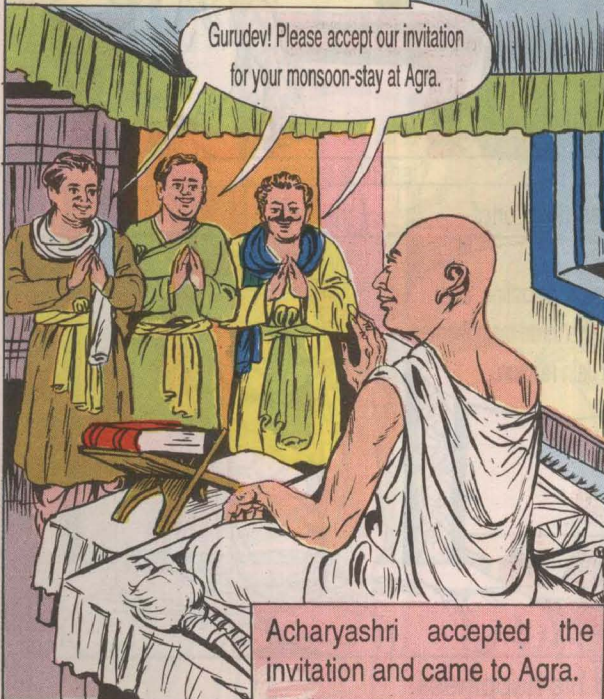
In the state of a ruler where there is no animal-slaughter, no injustice and no atrocities on masses earns blessings of millions of beings.



This advice got imprinted in the memory of the emperor.

A few days later Shri Sangh of Agra requested Suriiji—

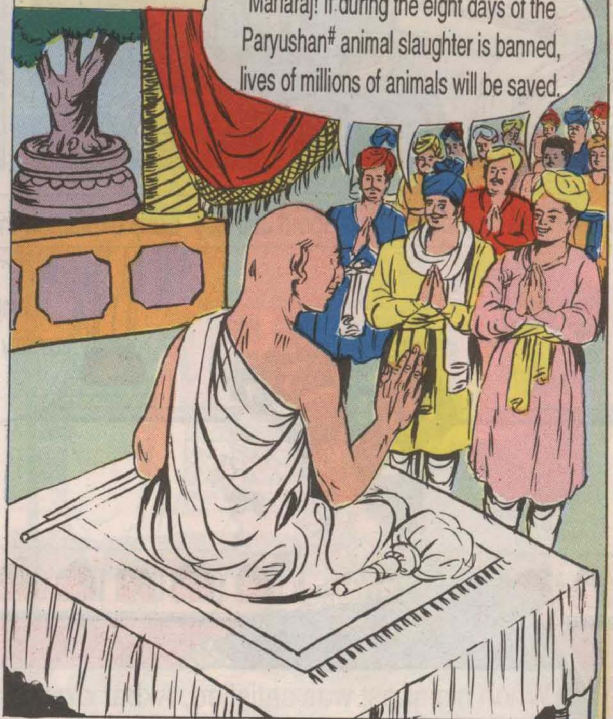
Gurudev! Please accept our invitation for your monsoon-stay at Agra.



Acharyashri accepted the invitation and came to Agra.

One day a delegation of shravaks requested Suriiji—

Maharaj! If during the eight days of the Paryushan# animal slaughter is banned, lives of millions of animals will be saved.



On Acharyashri's advise a delegation of prominent shravaks lead by Amipal Dosi went to Akbar. After greeting them and offering seats, Akbar asked—

Yes, O ruler of the land! Our eight day long Paryushan Parva is approaching. During these days animals should not be slaughtered. If a royal decree to this effect is issued Suriiji will be very happy.

How is Suriiji?
Has he sent
any message
for me?

An ordinance to this effect was promulgated and it was announced throughout the capital city of Agra—

By order of Emperor Jalaluddin Mohamed Akbar a ban is imposed on slaughter of animals for eight day period of Paryushan Parva of Jains. All abattoirs be kept closed for that duration.

For eight days all the abattoirs in Agra were closed.

After the monsoon-stay Heer Vijaya Suri left with the sangh for the pilgrimage of Shoripur, the birth place of Bhagavan Neminath.

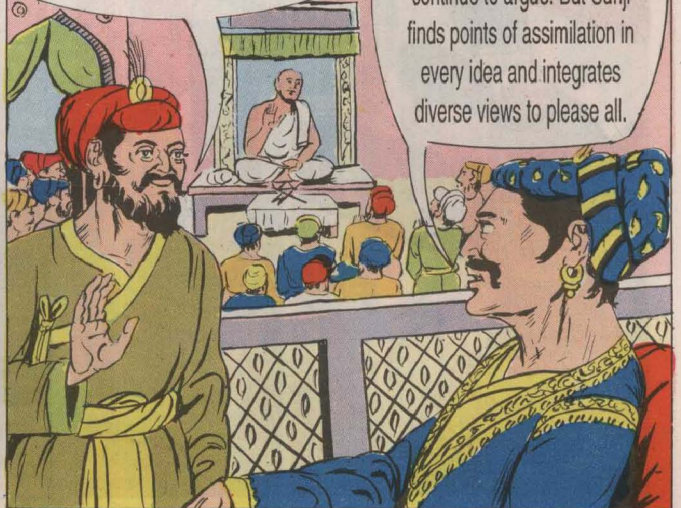


After paying homage at the pilgrimage center on the banks of river Jamuna, Suriiji returned to Fatehpur Sikri via Agra.

There he stayed in Shekh Abulfazal's palace. The great scholar of the Moghul court had long discussions with Acharyashri. One day Akbar also visited. Abulfazal said—

Sire! I have come across great scholars but I have yet to see as great a scholar and as humble a person as Suriiji.

Indeed, I too have the same feeling. Scholars are generally adamant on what they say and continue to argue. But Suriiji finds points of assimilation in every idea and integrates diverse views to please all.



Akbar requested Suriji—

You have spent your valuable time and blessed me with your teachings. I have hardly repaid you. Please give me an opportunity to serve you.

The ascetics have no needs. So why seek anything?

Akbar—

You are a great renouncer. However, if not for yourself, please ask for something at least for my spiritual benefit.

O Emperor! The thing I love most is compassion for beings. See these numerous caged birds in your palace, please get them released. I would love that.

The emperor at once instructed his attendants—

Go and release all birds from all the cages in the palace.

In no time the sky was filled with flying and chirping birds as if they were conveying their gratitude towards Suriji.

Emperor Akbar was very pleased with this compassionate and kind attitude of Suriji.

Once Akbar called Suriiji into his palace for a private talk—

Gurudev! The communion with you attracts me like a magnet. In your proximity I enjoy a unique mental peace and serenity.

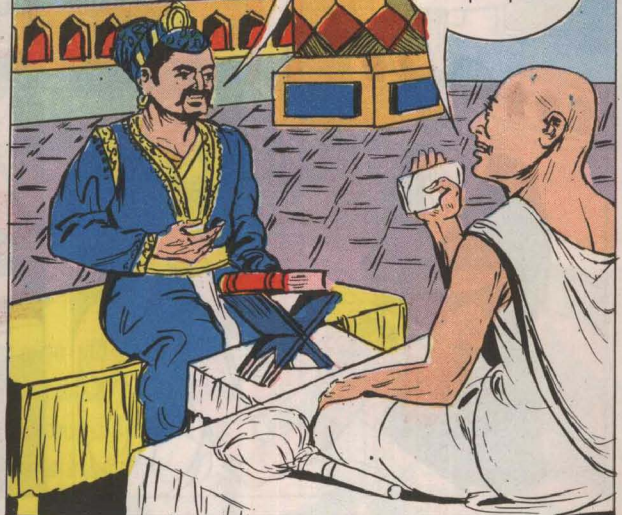
I strive for universal peace and so it is natural that you experience the same in my company; it is essential also for my goal.



Akbar said—

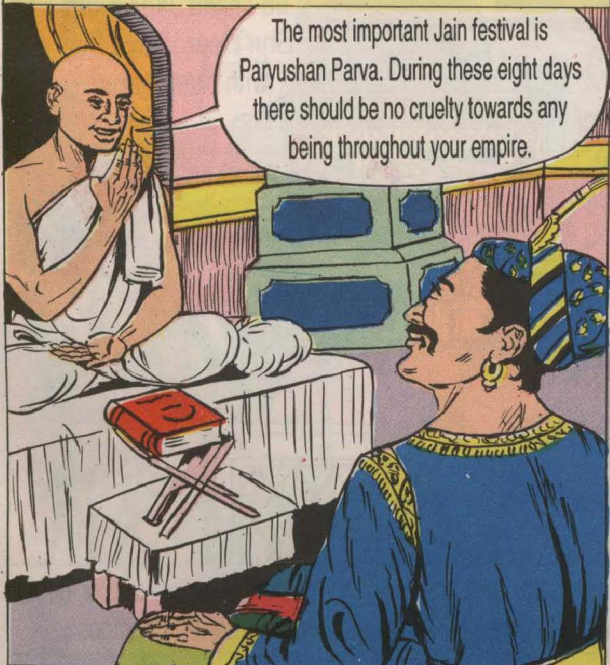
Maharaj! Today I detest the sins I committed. At one time when I used to eat tongues of 500 birds. When I recall that my soul trembles. Please tell me what should I do?

To eat meat is a great sin. Stop it. Have mercy on all beings. When you work for others' peace you automatically acquire peace.



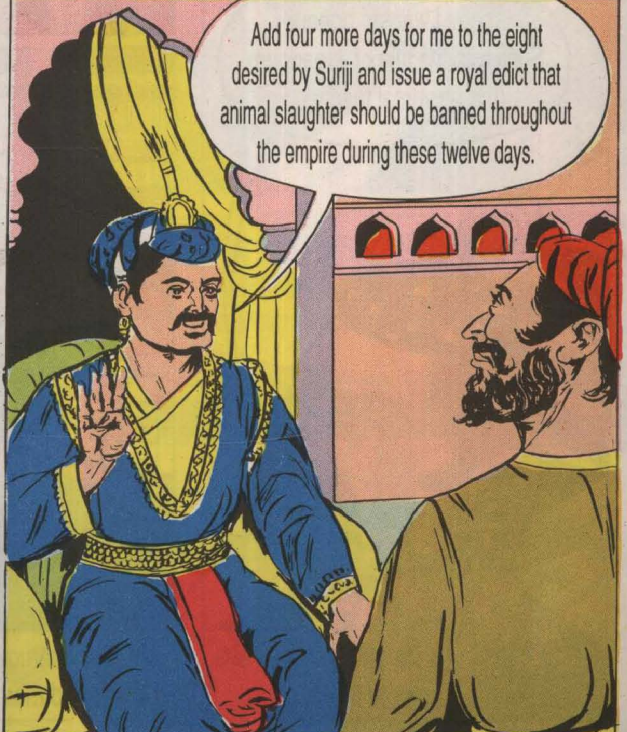
Suriiji's advise had a profound effect on the emperor. Gradually he abandoned eating meat for about six months in a year. One day Suriiji advised—

The most important Jain festival is Paryushan Parva. During these eight days there should be no cruelty towards any being throughout your empire.

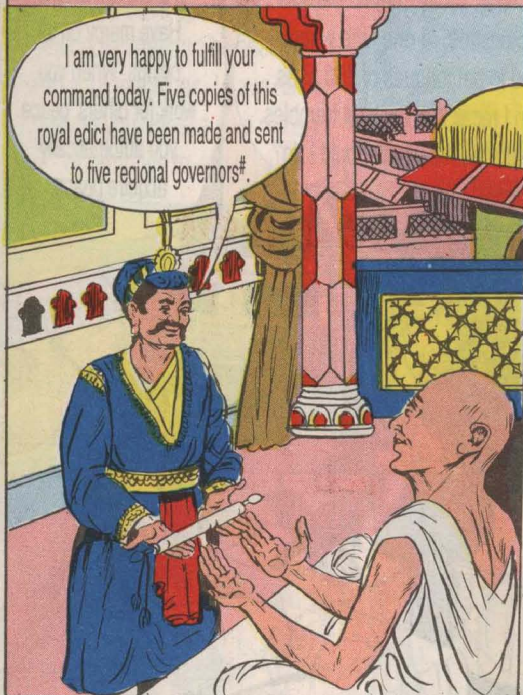


Akbar immediately instructed Abulfazal—

Add four more days for me to the eight desired by Suriiji and issue a royal edict that animal slaughter should be banned throughout the empire during these twelve days.



Abulfazal wrote the edict and put the Emperor's seal. Akbar himself presented the first copy of the edict to Suriji—



I am very happy to fulfill your command today. Five copies of this royal edict have been made and sent to five regional governors#.

In Akbar's court, one day, his nine-gems including Birbal, Todarmal, and Abulfazal were sitting. Suriji was also present there. Akbar said—



I have come across many scholars but I have yet to meet another like Suriji.

Sire! You are absolutely correct. In spite of being such a great scholar Suriji is very compassionate. He always thinks of the universal welfare.

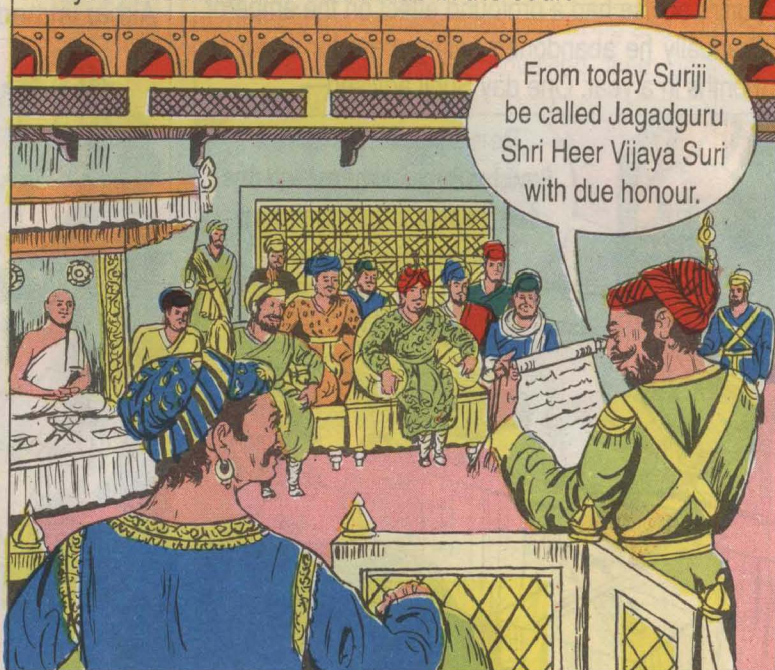
Akbar added—



Today I want to honour Suriji with the title of Jagadguru (the universal teacher).

All the prominent courtiers seconded this proposal.

A royal announcement was made in the court—



From today Suriji be called Jagadguru Shri Heer Vijaya Suri with due honour.

On the instructions of the emperor thousands of birds, hundreds of deer, rabbit, and many other animals were released under the edict of amnesty.

The five copies were sent to Gujarat, Delhi, Fatehpur (Ajmer), Nagpur (Southern India), and Lahore (Multan).

After rewarding Emperor Akbar with spiritual benefits for many years one day Suriji said—

Now I must go to Gujarat.

Suriji! If you want to go, please leave some of your disciples here with me. I derive peace from the spiritual discourses.

Acharyashri pointed at his scholarly disciples Shantichandra ji and Bhanuchandra ji and said—

These two will stay back with you and give spiritual discourses.

Next morning Suriji left Fatehpur Sikri for Gujarat.

One day Shekh Abulfazal said to The emperor—

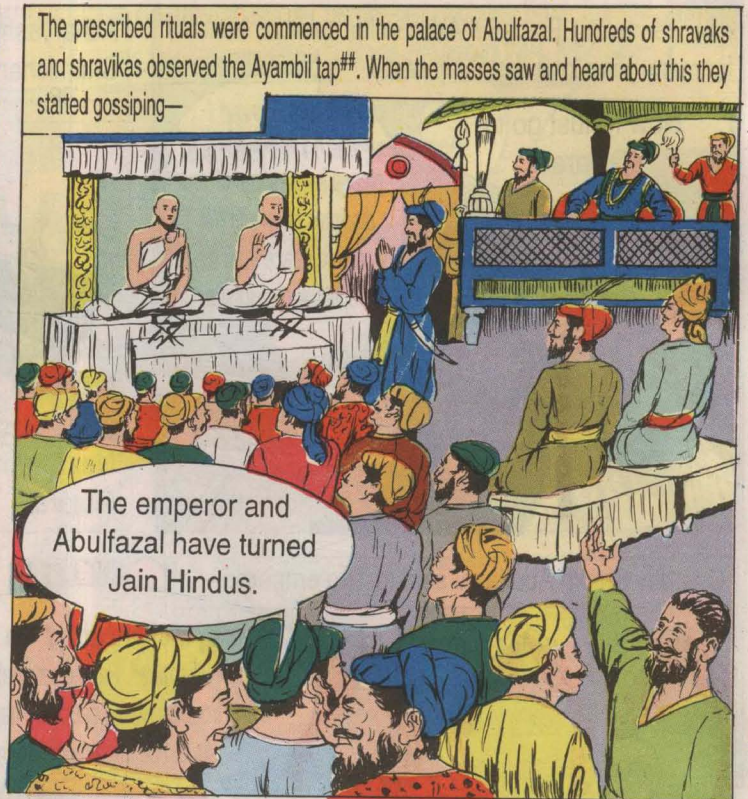
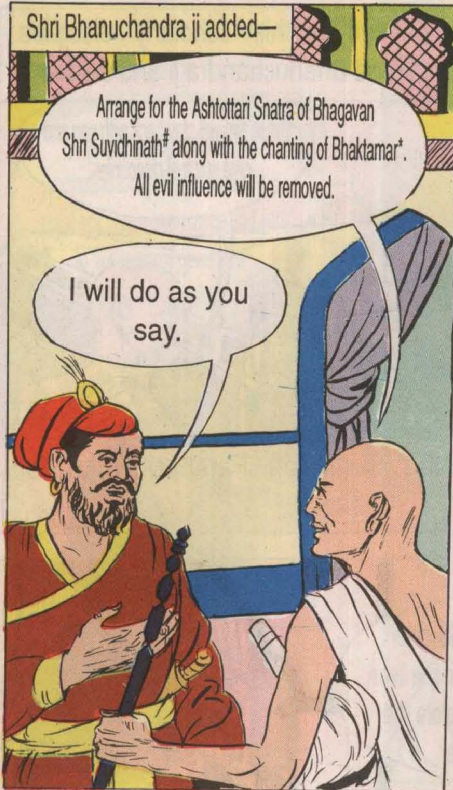
Sire! My wife has given birth to a daughter in Mool Nakshatra#. People say that if she lives many troubles will be caused. Therefore she should be thrown into the river.

Akbar asked Shri Bhanuchandra ji—

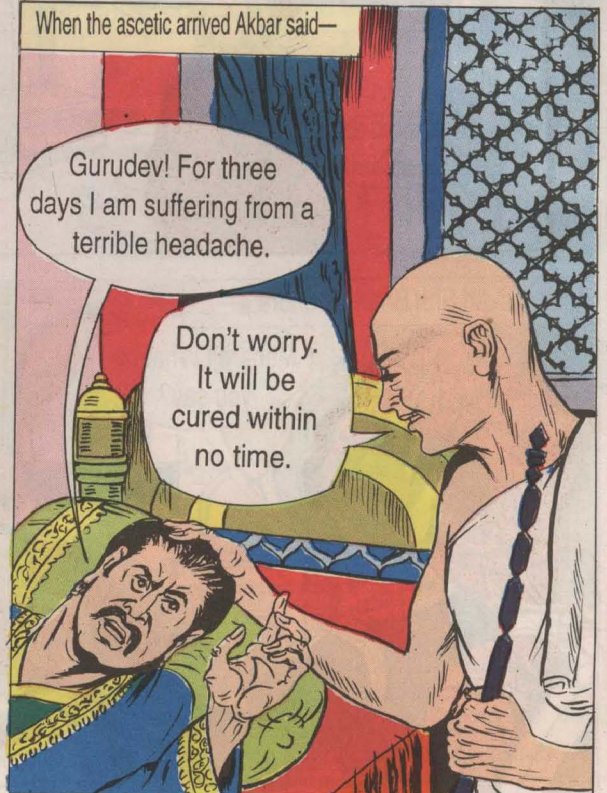
Maharaj! What do you say?

It is not proper to commit the great sin of killing a woman. I will show you the way to pacify the evil influence.

An ominous conjunction of planets.



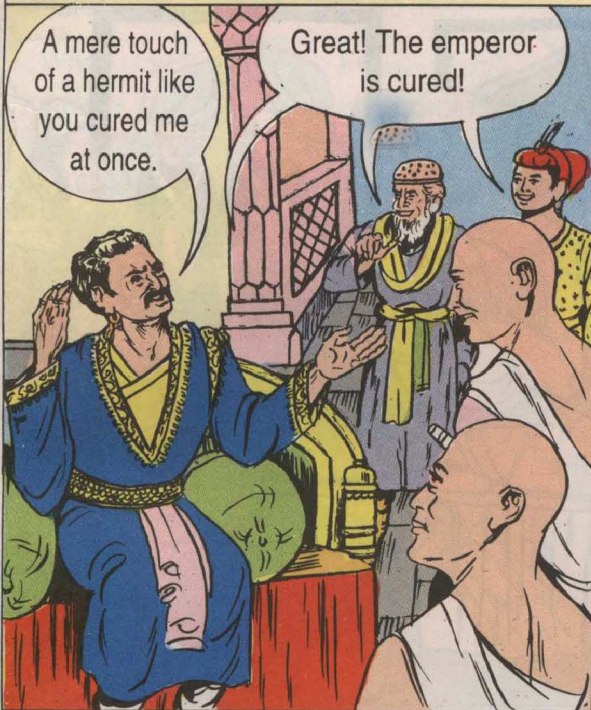
After Suri ji left, Bhanuchandra ji and Siddhichandra ji remained in regular contact with Akbar. One day Akbar had an acute headache. The doctors failed to cure him even after all possible efforts. The emperor asked in distress



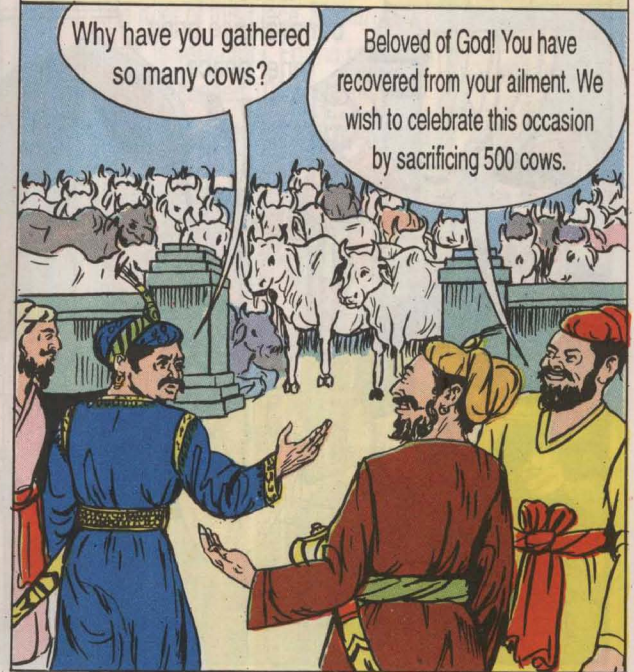
* A famous miraculous panegyric. # A Jain devotional ritual.

An austere practice where food prepared from only one type of grain is taken.

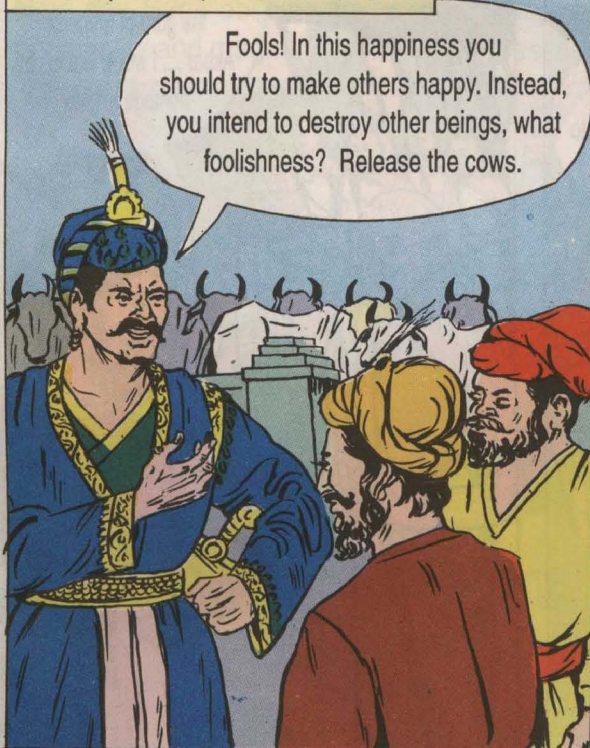
Bhanuchandra ji gently stroked his head and soon the pain was removed. The emperor was pleased—



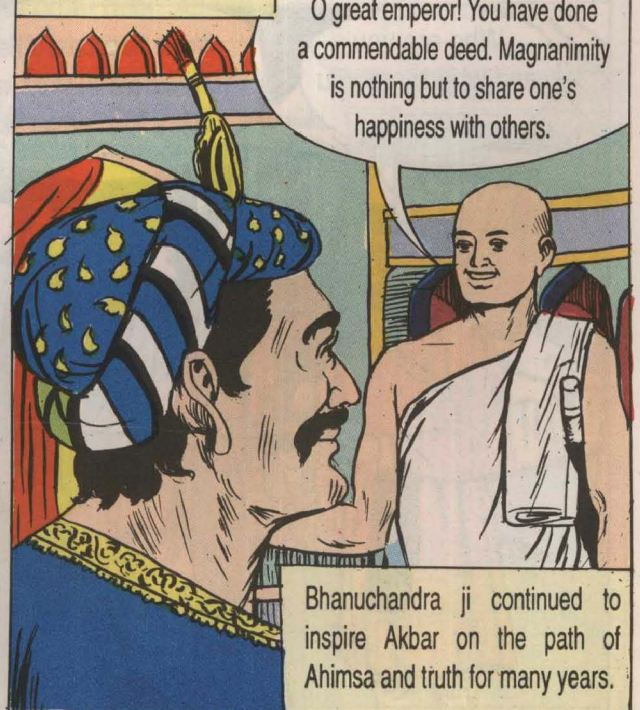
The courtiers gathered five hundred cows in a yard to slaughter them for the celebration. When Akbar came to know of it he asked—



The emperor expressed his anger—

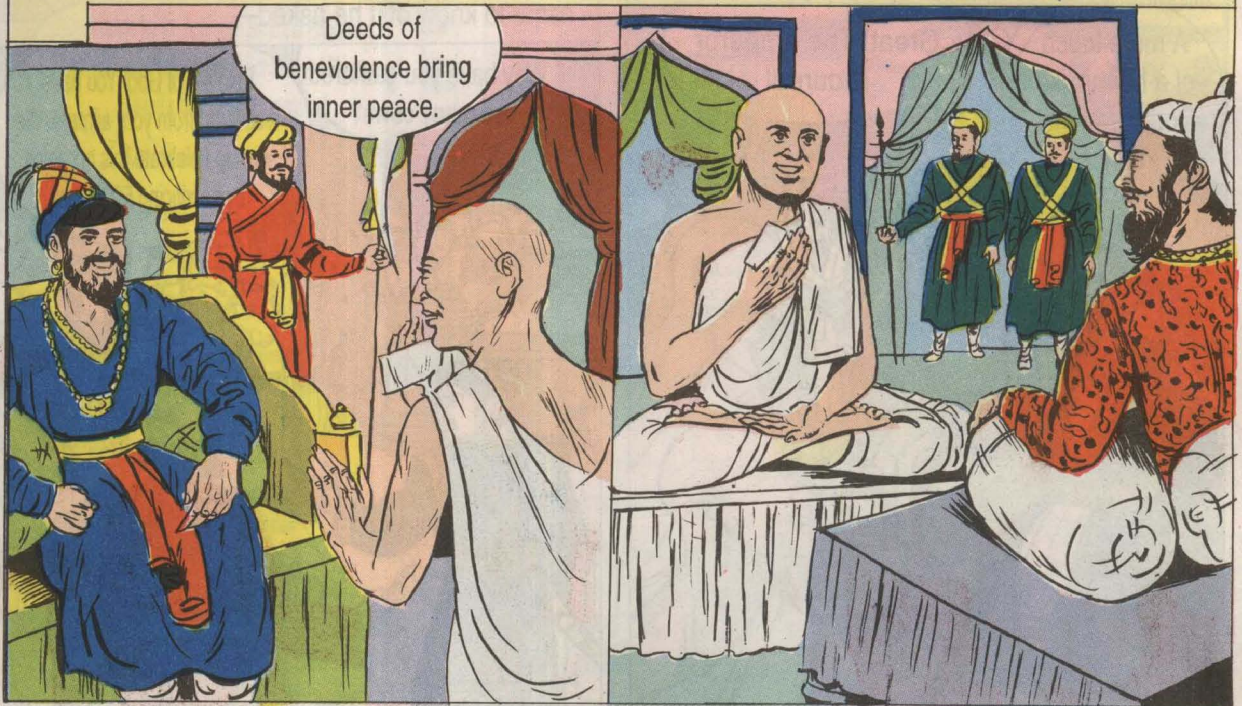


When Bhanuchandra ji came to know of this he went to Akbar and said—

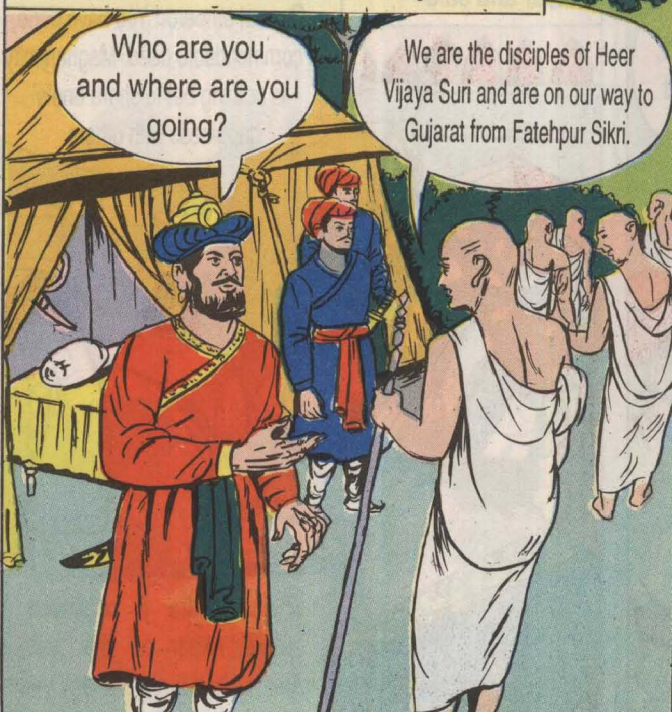


Bhanuchandra ji continued to inspire Akbar on the path of Ahimsa and truth for many years.

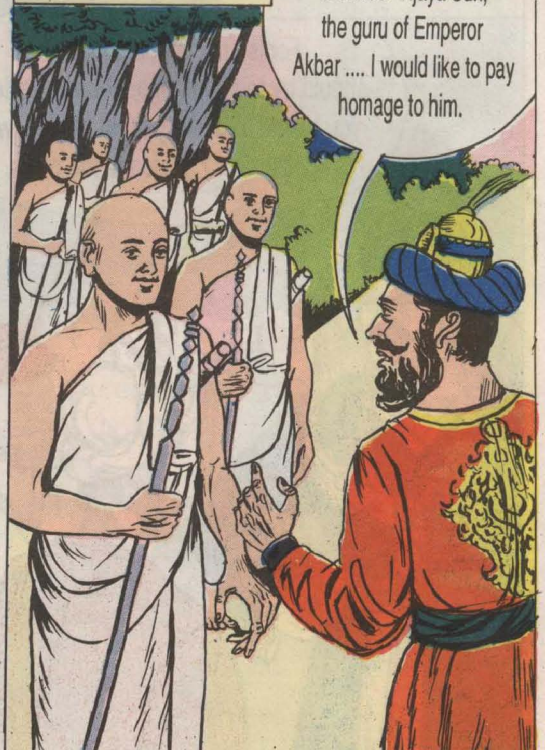
On way to Gujarat Suriji came in contact with many Muslim rulers. They were highly impressed with the miraculous power of his austerities and oration. They became his devotees and launched many welfare projects.



Suriji once visited Medta when Khankhana, the son of Behramkhan# was camping there. When he saw ascetics coming he asked—

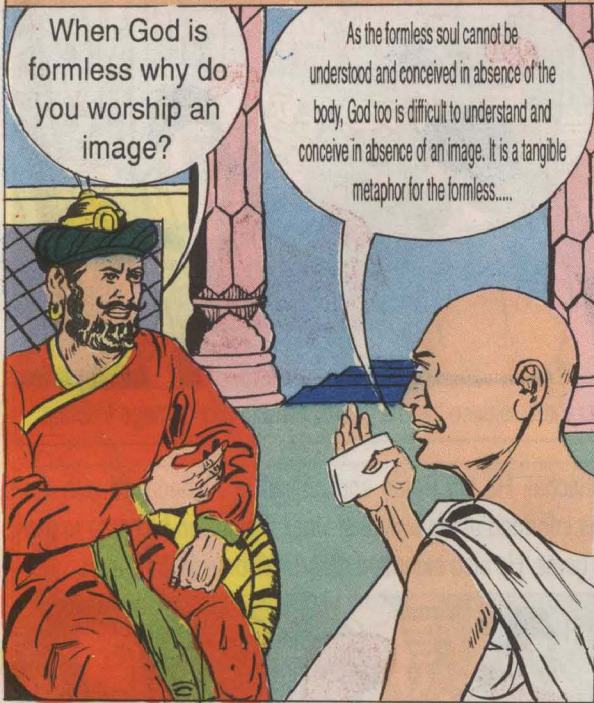


Khankhana said—

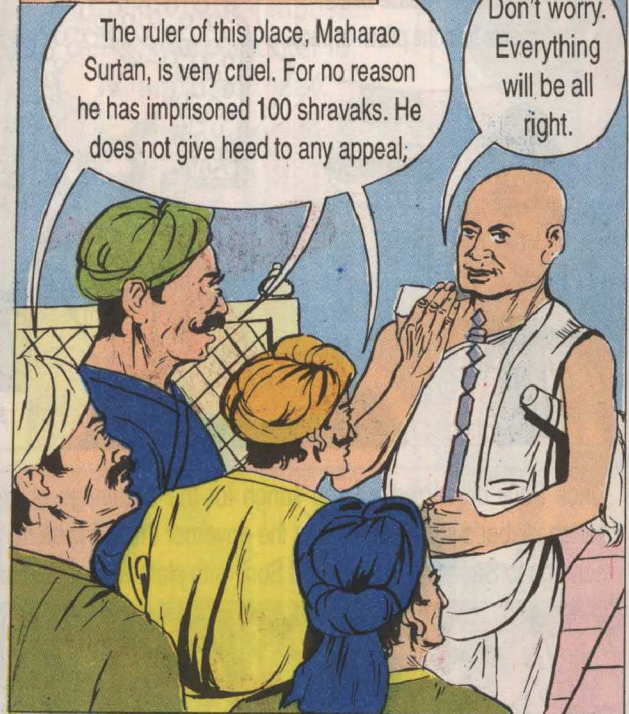


The brave commander of Akbar's father, Humayun. He was instrumental in Akbar's ascension to the throne. Later, Akbar imprisoned him for his revolt.

Khankhana went to Heer Vijaya Suri. He was highly impressed with Suriiji's preaching. He asked—



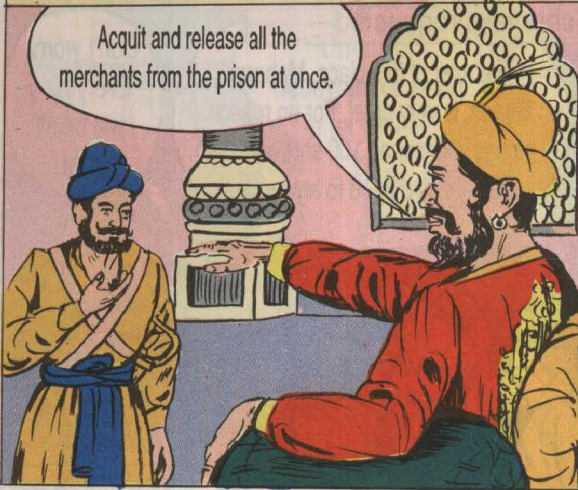
Once Suriiji arrived at Sirohi. The local shravaks requested—



Next day Suriiji observed the Ayambil tapa and went to see the cruel Surtan. The towering personality and magnetism of Suriiji impressed the cruel ruler. After the discourse he asked—



Influenced by Suriiji's words the ruler issued orders—



After there release the merchants went to pay homage to Suriiji.

Once Suriiji organized a large sangh for the pilgrimage of Siddhachal. He left Patan and arrived at Ahmedabad with the sangh. Akbar's son, Murad, was the governor there. When he was informed of the arrival of Heer Vijaya Suri he came to pay homage to Suriiji and worshipped Suriiji with plates full of gold and gems. He also extended grand welcome to the sangh.



After the discourse, the governor said—

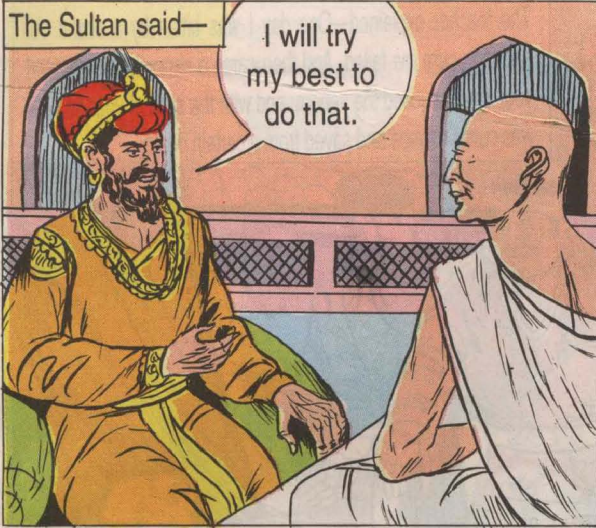


You should try to refrain from two things—womanizing and consuming intoxicants like Cannabis, opium, or alcohol.



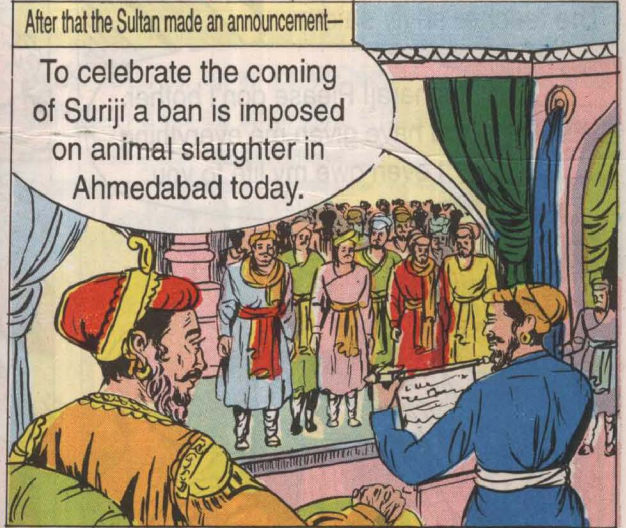
The Sultan said—

I will try
my best to
do that.



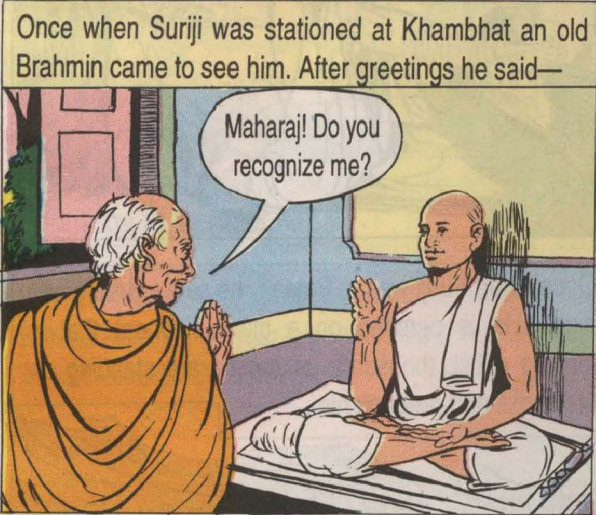
After that the Sultan made an announcement—

To celebrate the coming
of Suriiji a ban is imposed
on animal slaughter in
Ahmedabad today.



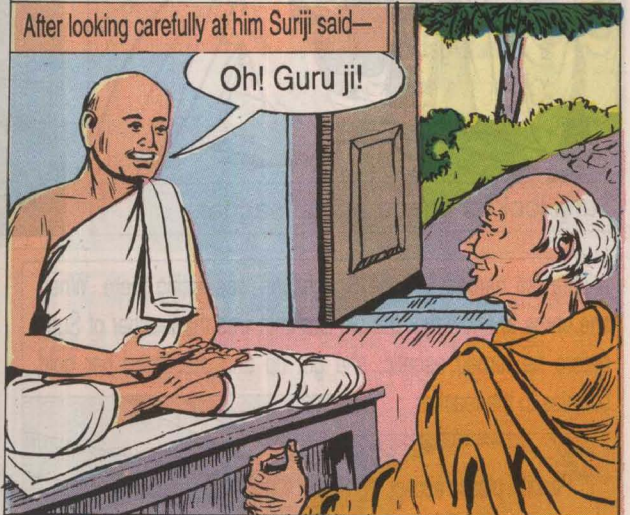
Once when Suriiji was stationed at Khambhat an old
Brahmin came to see him. After greetings he said—

Maharaj! Do you
recognize me?



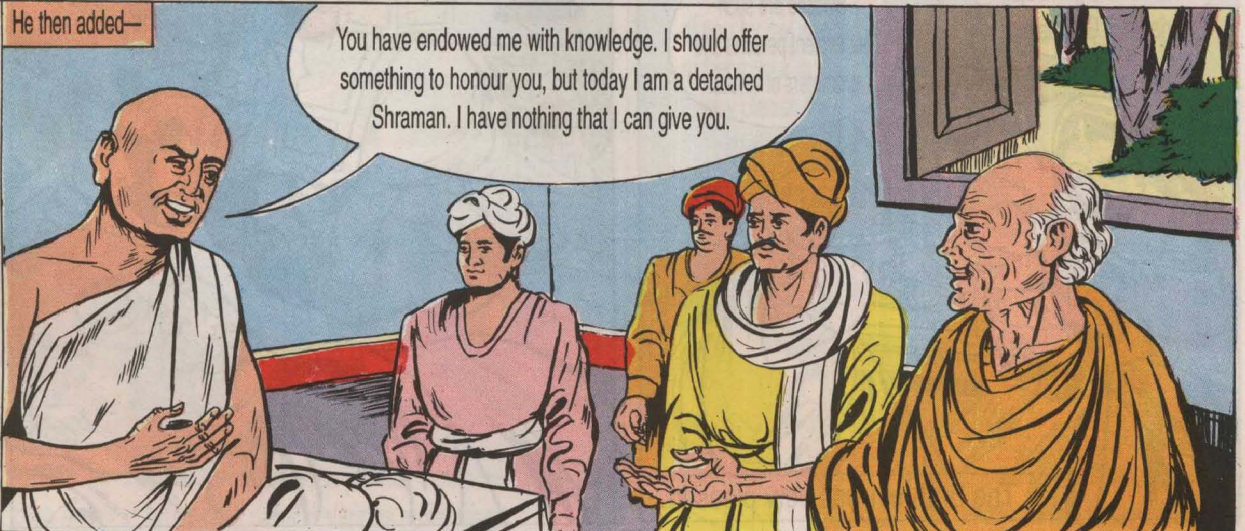
After looking carefully at him Suriiji said—

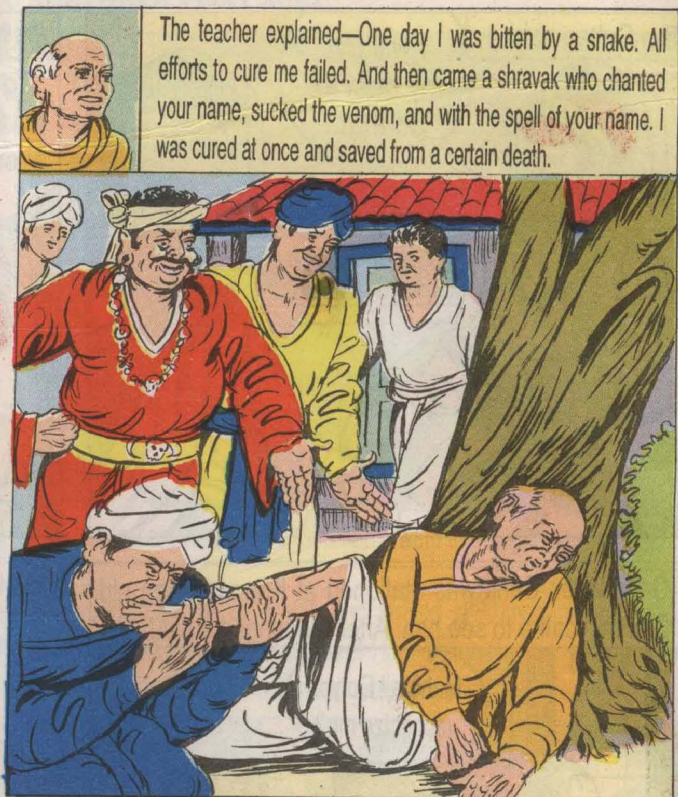
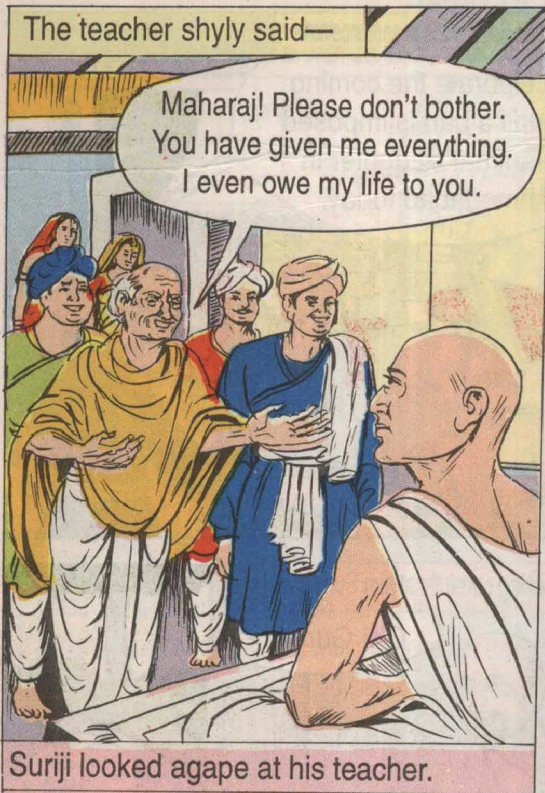
Oh! Guru ji!



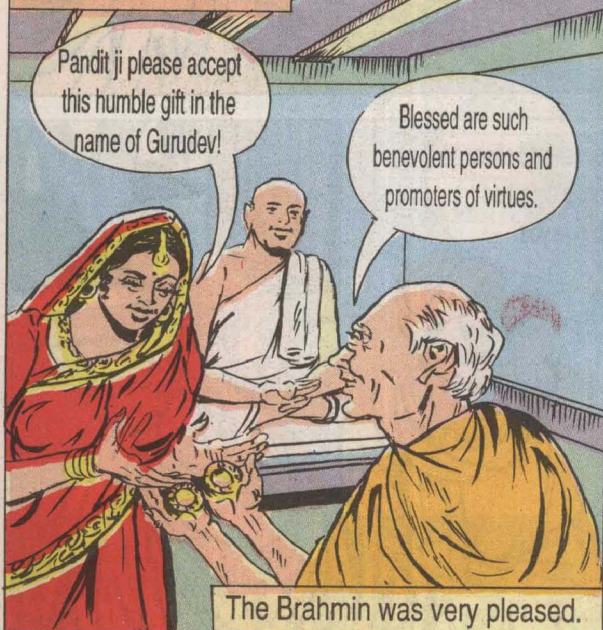
He then added—

You have endowed me with knowledge. I should offer
something to honour you, but today I am a detached
Shraman. I have nothing that I can give you.





A shravika named Sangde Sanghavan was sitting there. When she came to know that the old Brahmin was the teacher of Suriji before he turned ascetic, she got up and presented her gold bangles to the teacher.



Once when Suriji was in Patan # he saw a dream one night—He is perched on a giant elephant that is moving uphill, thousands of people are standing on the flanks and greeting him.

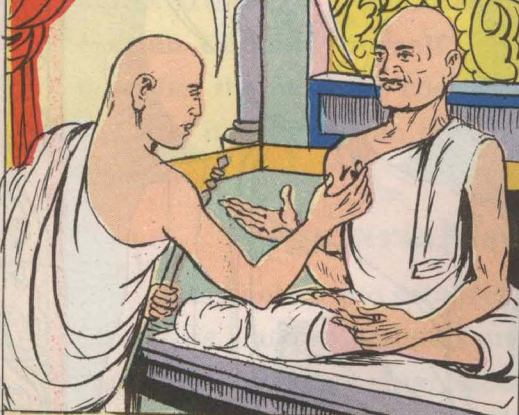


After the monsoon-stay of 1648 V.

He narrated the dream to his disciples. One of his scholarly disciples, Somvijaya said—

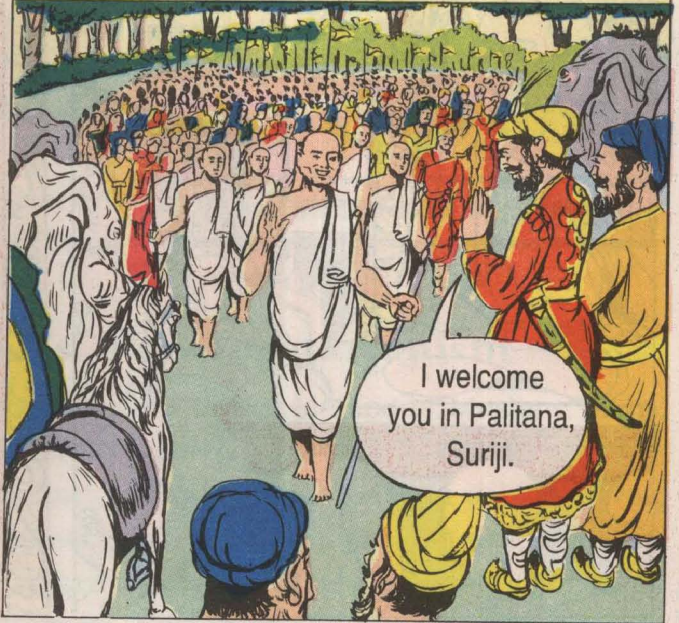
Gurudev! This dream forebodes a pilgrimage to Siddhachal.

Yes! it is possible.



A few days later Suriiji decided to go for a pilgrimage to Siddhachal.

When the Patan Jain sangh came to know of this, everyone decided to accompany Suriiji. They also decided that they will observe Chhehari # for the duration of the pilgrimage. Thousands of men and women arrived at Palitana with Suriiji where the ruler of Sorath, Navarang Khan, extended grand welcome to Suriiji.



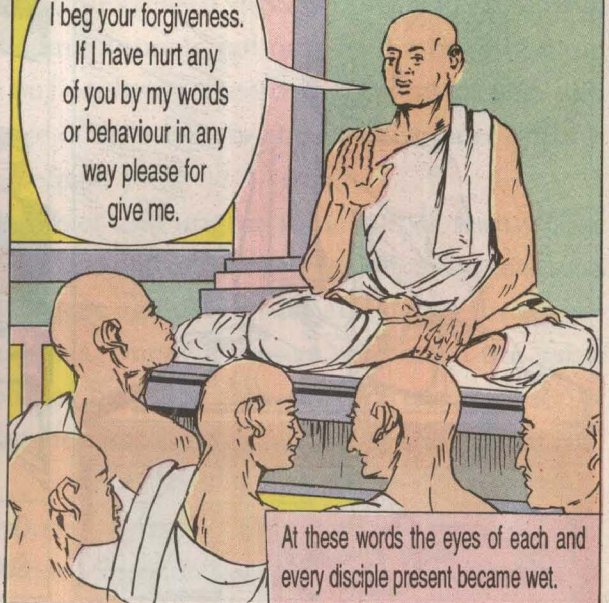
On the full moon day of the month of Chaitra Suriiji commenced the ascent of Siddhachal (Shatrunjaya mountain). He was followed by hundreds of thousands of devotees chanting the name of Adishvar Dada (Bhagavan Rishabhdev).



On the occasion of the auspicious journey numerous young men and merchants took vows of various austerities.

In the year 1652 V. Suriiji was spending his monsoon stay at Una. He had gone feeble due to old age. One day when he realized that the end was near, he called his disciples and said—

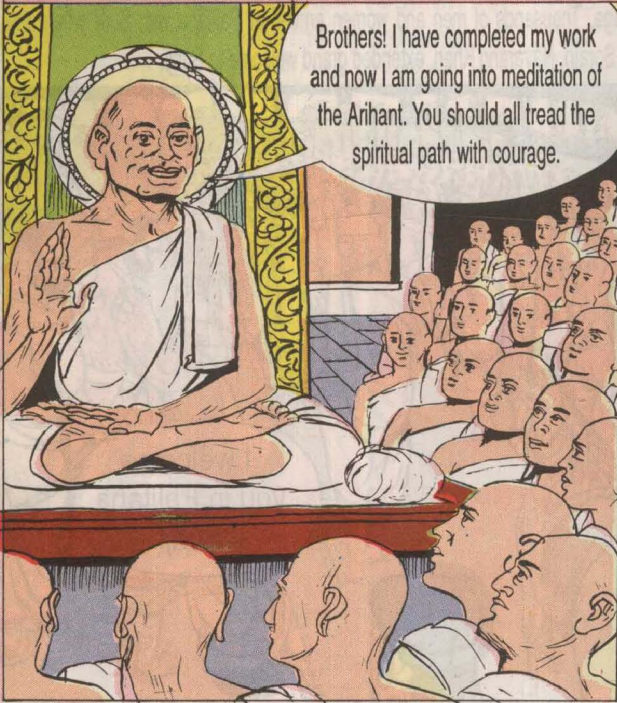
I beg your forgiveness.
If I have hurt any
of you by my words
or behaviour in any
way please for
give me.



At these words the eyes of each and every disciple present became wet.

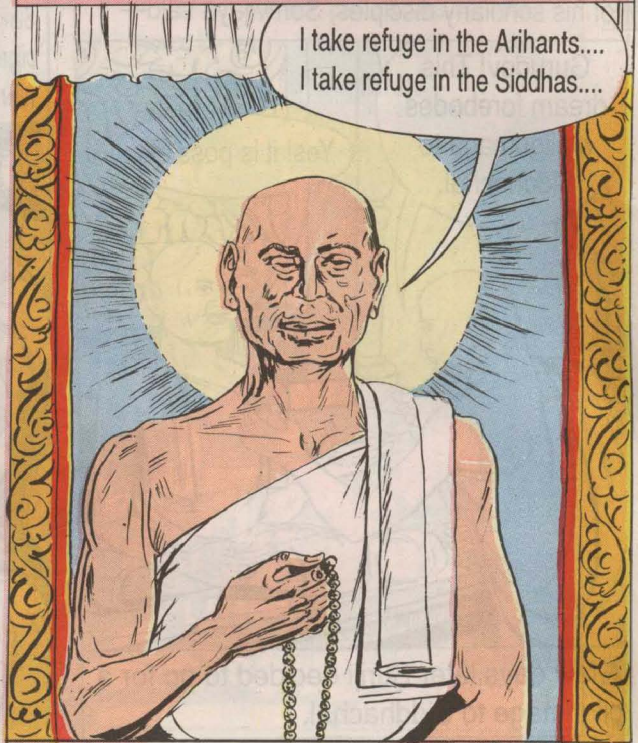
Six fold austerity—(1) to eat once in a day, (2) to sleep on the floor, (3) to move on feet, (4) to observe partial ascetic vows, (5) to refrain from eating anything sacchit, and (6) to remain celibate.

In the evening, after doing Pratikraman he sat in the lotus pose and addressed all his disciples—



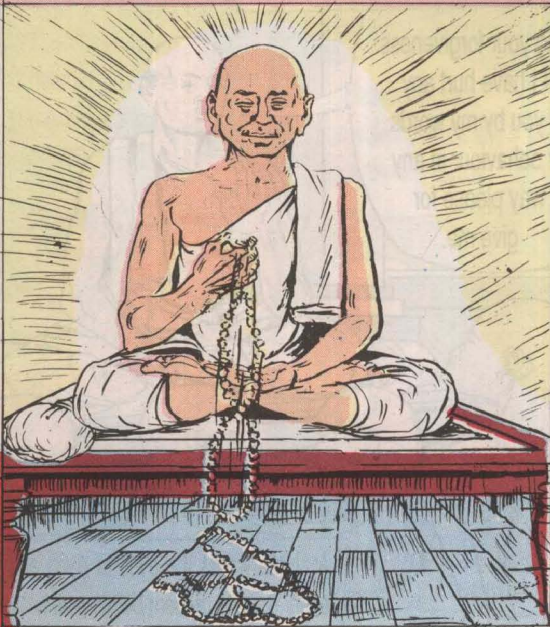
Brothers! I have completed my work and now I am going into meditation of the Arihant. You should all tread the spiritual path with courage.

To this he added his last words—

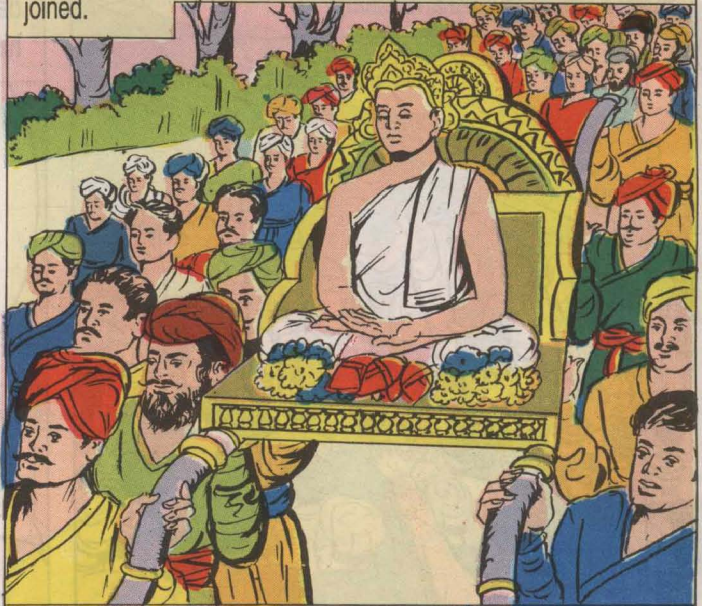


I take refuge in the Arihants....
I take refuge in the Siddhas....

Suriji chanted four rosaries of the mantra. When he started for the fifth time, the rosary fell from his grip. A brilliant aura radiated out of his body and vanished in the sky #.



Next day Suriji's funeral procession was taken out. A large crowd of mourning people from all faiths including Jains, Hindus, Muslims, joined.



On the seashore of Una on a funeral pyre of sandal wood the last rites of Suriji were performed with Aguru, camphor, butter, and coconuts.



Dear friends,

In the previous issue we talked about the meaning of vegetarianism. In this we are going to present the views on vegetarianism by Gopinath Aggarwal who has authored the book **"Vegetarian or Non-vegetarian Choose Yourself"**. This article describes the pros and cons of vegetarian diet and non-vegetarian diet. Let us read his views.



Compassionate Heart

Vegetarianism Vs. Non-vegetarianism

The scholars and saints of every religion of the world—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Jains, Buddhists and others—have described violence, cruelty, untruth, anger and hatred as sins. Needless hurt and the infliction of pain on other living beings has been described by all of them as equally sinful. Non-violence, kindness, forgiveness and truthfulness are described as Dharma or religion. Their main teaching is to see in every living being the image of the great Heavenly Father and to deal with them accordingly. They not only condemned eating of flesh for food but also taught mankind to treat all living beings, animals, birds etc. with compassion and feed them with grains which was described as an act of kindness.

Nature has also provided innumerable tasty and nutritious vegetable products for human consumption while at the same time created various birds and animals to help and serve the mankind. These birds and animals not only lend a helping hand in maintaining the balance of nature, but on being accorded little bit of love and affection, serve the mankind from the core of their hearts and become more faithful and loyal than even their fellow human beings.

It is definitely an act of total misconduct and ungratefulness that man whose body has been made by nature akin to the body structure of vegetarian species and different from that of meat-eating species, goes against nature and defies the teachings of saints and sages and consumes meat. One will always be paid in the same kind for his deeds. No action either good or bad ever goes unrewarded. Sooner or later, we are sure to be rewarded or punished for our deeds. This is an unalterable, inevitable and universal truth.

Today, doctors and scientists from every corner of the world are warning that flesh-foods induce cancer and incurable diseases and shorten the life-span, whereas



vegetarian foods yield more nutrition and enhance the body's immunity to fight diseases, promoting health and long life. Most of the animals used for food eat sorts of unhygienic eatables and are likely to have harmful infection in their body. Imagine the plight of person who consumes such flesh and becomes prone to innumerable diseases. If even then, human beings continue to destroy themselves by eating flesh-food, either in blind race of copying others or in the pursuit of so called modernity, it can only be called their misfortune or ill luck.

Before slaughtering animals for food, no adequate examination is made of the diseases they harbour in their bodies and thus their diseases enter the bodies of those who consume their flesh. Besides this, the cruel and torturous atmosphere in which these animals are killed, creates a lot of fear, tension and anger which further makes the meat poisonous. This poisonous and disease-infested meat, on consumption, induces lots of incurable diseases and it seems that it fulfils the killed animal's curse, "As you consume me, so will I consume you."

Oh, my non-vegetarian brethren, before you get ready to eat meat the next time, please do pay a visit to the poultry farm and slaughter house to see with your own eyes the torture inflicted on these silent victims, their pain and suffering and the ghastly expressions on the faces of these animals. Then ask your conscience whether our superiority and humanity lie only in the selfish perception of our taste-buds and in snatching for ever life out of these living beings which we can never give back.

Dear brothers, please look into the pros and cons of your own interest. Flesh-foods instead of providing nutrition, give you incurable diseases and diminish your life-span. Such foods pollute your minds and hearts, destroy your happiness and peace of mind, leading to decline of morals and character, pushing not only yourselves but also your coming generations towards incurable diseases and unsurmountable troubles. For the sake of saving your children whom you love more than your own lives, from the dangers of cancer, heart ailments and other social disadvantages, please stop consumption of flesh-foods right from today itself. Every moment is the right moment for repentance. According to the scriptures, "Those who renounce flesh-foods are equally rewarded as those who perform a *yajna*". —Gopinath Aggarwal

Jai Jinendra

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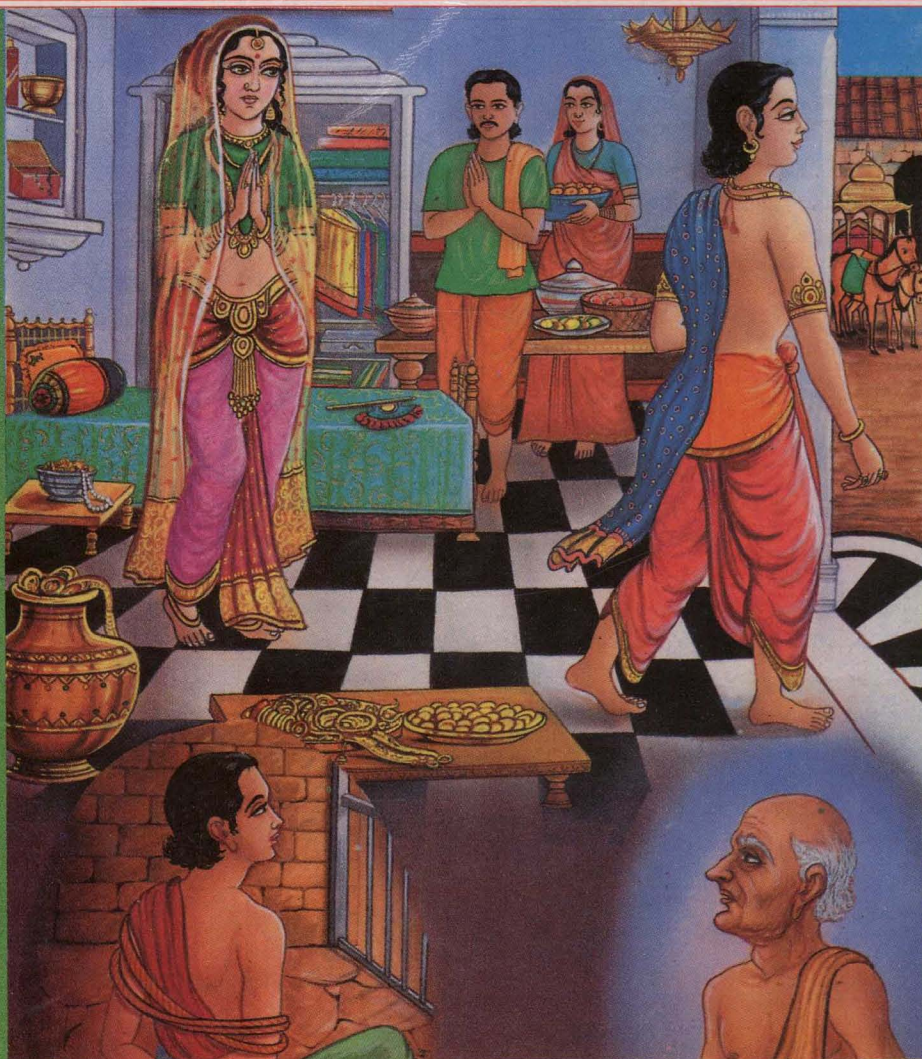
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THE TRUE RENOUNCER

1. A person who abandons all objects of fondness—such as a house filled with conveniences, a beautiful woman, wealth and glory, servants, horses and chariots—with a feeling of detachment is a true renouncer.
Dasavaikalika Sutra (Ch. 2, verse 3)

2. A person who is unable to enjoy any or all of such things owing to some necessity such as restrictions, dependence, physical or mental disability, etc. is not a true renouncer.

Dasavaikalika Sutra (Ch. 2, verse 3)

The illustration explains such necessity by showing a man bound with ropes within a prison and an emaciated old man incapable of any physical activity.